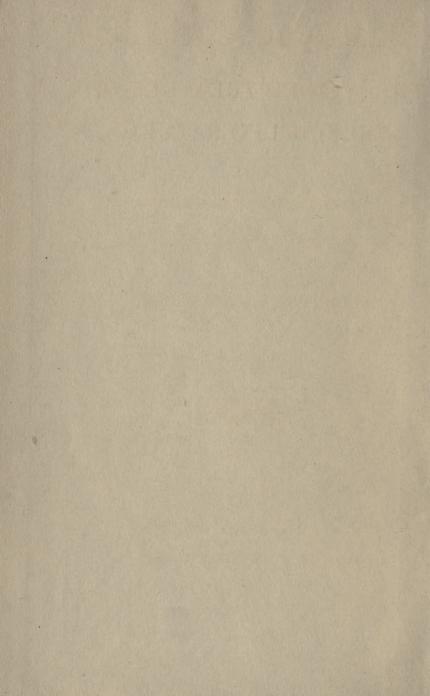


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THE OXFORD TREASURY OF FRENCH LITERATURE

VOL. I

MEDIAEVAL, RENAISSANCE, AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

BY

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OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
1915

PQ 1109 L3 VI.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK
TORONTO MELBOURNE BOMBAY
HUMPHREY MILFORD M.A.

PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY



1002103

PREFACE

This Treasury of French Literature is greatly indebted to the Treasury of English Literature published in recent years by the Clarendon Press. But for that work, indeed, it would scarcely have come into existence at all. It has much the same aims, and seeks to achieve them, in so far as the difference of subject will allow, by much the same methods. It does not profess to be a history of French literature, but merely a preliminary survey of the field, the report of one sent out to spy the fatness of the land, and bring the fruit of it again in his hands, that those who read may be tempted to enter into it and possess it for their own.

It is to consist of three volumes. As in the case of its prototype, it was resolved after careful consideration to respect the unity of the drama, and the middle volume of the three will accordingly be devoted to the development of the French theatre, from its beginnings down to the nineteenth century inclusive. This, the first volume, is concerned with the literary forms other than the dramatic, as they appear in French literature from the Song of Roland to the Memoirs of Saint-Simon, that is, approximately from the middle of the eleventh down to the end of the seventeenth century; Saint-Simon, though his memoirs overshoot by several decades the end of the seventeenth century, could not well

be detached from the Siècle de Louis-Quatorze. The third volume will take up the tale where the first sets it down, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and will carry it on through that and the following century.

This is, so far as I am aware, the first work of its kind in which the literature of mediaeval France has received serious treatment. The innovation demanded, and has received, very careful consideration. The treatment at some length of mediaeval French literature commended itself on several grounds. It is intrinsically interesting. As the literature of the youth of a nation, it appeals in its objectivity to the young mind, for which the work is particularly designed, perhaps more than the abstract literature of a maturer age. And some acquaintance with it is essential to a right understanding of earlier English literature, and by no means without its value in the study of later English literature, as will appear in the text itself.

The chief, indeed the only argument to the contrary, was the danger of overloading the text with extracts in an unfamiliar idiom. That objection has been partly removed by the method adopted for the distribution of the material into volumes, whereby the extracts in Old French are divided between the first two volumes. It has been further met by sketching in outline at considerable length, in English, the longer and more important of the Old French works, and by printing translations into modern French of the selected extracts. Where possible, I have availed myself for that purpose of existing

standard translations. Thus for the Song of Roland I have used the translation of M. Léon Gautier, for Aucassin et Nicolette that of M. Bida, and for the extracts from Villehardouin and Joinville those of M. Natalis de Wailly: and for permission to include these I am indebted to the courtesy respectively of Messrs, Alfred Mame et Fils, of Tours: of Messrs, Hachette: and of Messrs. Firmin Didot Frères. Fils et Cie, of Paris. Where such translations failed me, I have been constrained to make translations for myself, and in this-for an Englishman-highly delicate task I have greatly profited by the kind permission of my friend, Professor Barbeau, of the University of Caen, to submit my translations to his revision. Since they have thus passed under the eve of a cultured Frenchman, I am able to offer them with the greater confidence that my nationality has not betraved me into any solecism that would be offensive to a refined French taste

And, after all, it is worth remembering that the gradual evolution of the French language during the literary period has not been interrupted by any such cataclysmic change as that which overtook English by reason of the Norman Conquest. The language even of the Song of Roland is much less remote from the French of to-day than that of Beowulf from modern English. And that is probably the only one of the monuments here illustrated which would present an entirely strange face to one familiar with modern French. From the Song of Roland on, the language rapidly grows more intelligible, and it is hoped that with the notes given

in the text, and the hints on reading Old French in the Appendix, a reader with the linguistic gift and some native taste for literature will have little difficulty in reading the extracts in the original. Even in the case of the earlier extracts the full text of the original Old French has been given, side by side with the modern translation. Though all the pupils may not be expected to crack the nut, some of the more enterprising may like to try their teeth on it. And since historical French grammar is studied increasingly in our schools, it did not seem advisable to deprive the book of the wider range of usefulness which might accrue to it from the inclusion of these originals.

Throughout the book, alike in the choice of the extracts and in the notes and excursuses, two aims have never been lost sight of. It has been sought to present such matter, and that in such a form, as would prove attractive to the young recruit of literature, whilst none the less remaining of the highest significance for the veteran. the taste and needs of the English pupil, plunged into an alien world, with whose history, ways of life and ways of thought he is equally unfamiliar, have been consistently consulted throughout. In this connexion, too, it has been borne in mind that English literature was profoundly influenced throughout this period by the literature of our neighbours, a debt repaid in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and this influence has on occasion been duly noted.

In conclusion I desire to express my peculiar

indebtedness to Principal Hadow, one of the collaborators in the English Treasury which has served me as exemplar, for the personal interest he has manifested in this companion Treasury at every stage of its growth, an interest which has been such as almost to entitle him to be called its godfather. To his experience acquired in the preparation of its precursor, to his knowledge of the educational needs of our schools, as also to his refined taste and mature literary judgement, much of what may be found worthy of approval in this work is due. The blame for its failings I must bear on my own shoulders.

A. G. L.



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BOOK I. MEDIAEVAL LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

CHANSONS DE GESTE

French literature, like Greek, like German, like English, begins with an epic. Not that such a sustained production as the *Iliad*, or the *Nibelungen-lied*, or the *Beowulf*, or the *Chanson de Roland*, *Chanson* springs unheralded into being, as absolutely the de Roland first poetic achievement of a people. But the rude songs of an earlier generation have as a rule lived only on the lips of men, and have left no trace of their existence, save in the more elaborate poems into which they have been gathered up. Thus to all intents and purposes French literature may be said to begin with the *Chanson de Roland*.

The Chanson de Roland is the first and finest of the long series of Chansons de Geste, the golden age Chansons of which extends from the middle of the eleventh to de Geste. the middle of the thirteenth century. Their subjectmatter permits of their classification, with few exceptions, into three groups or cycles, the cycle of France, the cycle of Brittany (or the Arthurian cycle), and the cycle of Rome and Greece. The

title Chansons de Geste, though often used loosely for all three, is strictly appropriate only to the first; the other two would be more fittingly denomi-

nated romances.

The Chansons de Geste properly so called far outweigh alike in number and originality the poems Cycle of of the two later cycles. They differ from them in France.

¹ Lat. gesta, things done, exploits.

that they give themselves out to be-and to some extent are—history. They are indeed history seen through the glamour of tradition. They relate the deeds of derring-do of the heroes of an older time. and are largely wrought up from older cantilènes. popular ballads not unlike our ballad of Chevy Chase. which in their original form no longer survive. The more primitive of them are admirable specimens of that popular epic of which the author is not an individual, but a people. In the feudal organization of society which it exhibits, and in the fierce lust of battle which it reflects, the strictly popular epic bears the deep impress of the Germanic conquerors of Gaul. The only element of non-Germanic origin which enters appreciably into its composition is that contributed by Christianity. It is to this Christianity—ardent in faith, but still largely material in its conceptions—that the Chansons de Geste are indebted for the element of the marvellous.

The Cycle of Brittany. Its origin.

The poems of the Arthurian cycle had their birth in Brittany—those extreme peninsulas of France and England in which branches of the Celtic peoples had maintained a measure of national existence over against the Roman and Norman invaders. The material finally elaborated in this cycle was first created from history and legend and circulated by the bards of the Bretons, as had been the material of the French cycle by the French minstrels. The stories, so familiar to us from their treatment by English poets, cluster round the name of the British king Arthur, himself an historical personage no less than Charlemagne. Garnered in the Latin chronicles of Nennius and Geoffroy of Monmouth, this new store of poetic material was first drawn upon by the Norman poet, Robert Wace, in his Roman de Brut (1155). He it was who added to it the legend of the Round Table, borrowed from the still living oral tradition. Walter Map and Robert de

Boron gave currency to the legend of the Graal: legends of Oriental origin were caught up into the cycle; and the Arthurian legends were finally wrought up by Chrestien de Troyes into a series of poems which set the seal upon their popularity.

By the end of the twelfth century the Arthurian Character cycle had supplanted the older cycle of Charlemagne of the in the popular favour. There is a marked contrast Cycle. between the two. The epic of battle, simple, rugged, marches straight to the goal as with the measured tramp of armed men: the smooth and flowing verse of the new epic loves to ramble in zigzags and to loiter in pleasant places. The manners are softened, The battle-lust has yielded to a passion for adventure: the deliverance from duress of some distressed damsel—the slaughter of some monster—some beneficent, or it may be some whimsical quest—with honour as guerdon, or the favouring smile of a pair of bright eyes. For woman, almost a nullity in the epic of battle and bloodshed, is the presiding goddess in this, the epic of love. The Arthurian romances exhibit a Christianity of a refined and mystical character, but they are chiefly indebted for the marvellous element to the fantastic dreams of the Celtic and the Oriental imagination. The scene is not laid in the work-a-day world, but rather in that land of faëry which lives for us in the pages of the Faerie Queene.

These romances of the Round Table were con-Kinship temporary with and closely related to the courtly of the lyric of the trouvères. They conspired together to Arthurian Romances impress on the society of the Middle Ages the and the character of courtly refinement which we associate Trouvère with mediaeval chivalry. The refinement may Lyric. often have been only skin-deep, but the ideal, however imperfectly realized, has not been without lasting influence for good in the evolution of Western civilization

The Cycle of Antiquity.

The third cycle, that of Greek and Roman antiquity, was the least spontaneous of the three. The appetite for novelty had been whetted by the Arthurian romances, and to gratify it the trouvères turned to the literature of ancient Greece and Rome. They were not in the least concerned to produce a faithful picture of the antique world. but they eagerly exploited the new mine, and wrought up the material it yielded into romances of the type with which they were familiar. Troy becomes a mediaeval city and the antique heroes mediaeval knights; the whole atmosphere is mediaeval: love is the mainspring of the action. and the fairy machinery of the Arthurian legends is transported bodily into the new series of poems. Thus we have a Romance of Alexander, a Romance of Troy, a Romance of Aeneas, a Romance of Thebes. For us English this development of mediaeval romance has an especial interest in that one of its products became, through the medium of Boccaccio and Chaucer, the source of Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida

Later history of the Chansons de Geste.

This wonderful burst of epic song had its echoes over the whole of the Western world, and like the voice of Roland's horn, caught up by valley after valley, these echoes have reverberated down to the present day. Through the heyday of their glory, through their decadence in the fourteenth century, through the prose versions and perversions of the fifteenth century, through the all but complete neglect of the three succeeding centuries, when they pass out of the ken of the literary world, and live on only in dwindled and degraded form as popular chapbooks, the Chansons de Geste have never wholly lost their hold upon men. The chap-books are still thumbed by illiterate peasants in out-of-the-way villages, and the original poems, triumphantly rehabilitated during the first half of last century.

have opened new sources of inspiration to our modern poets.

The authors of these poems were known as Trouvères trouvères. The trouvère was not infrequently of and noble or knightly rank. If of humbler standing, he Jongleurs. was generally attached to the service of some great lord, and declaimed his verses for the entertainment of his lord's household. The jongleur 2 was a more humble personage, a sort of strolling player. He declaimed the poems furnished him by the trouvère, shifting his quarters from tayern to tayern, and presenting himself at any festive gathering where there was a likelihood of his talents being in demand. These talents were by no means limited to storytelling: the jongleur was versed in all the tricks of skill which the term 'juggler' still connotes, and could himself turn a rhyme on occasion. The ionaleurs travelled in bands. They declaimed the songs in a kind of recitative, accompanying themselves on the vielle, a primitive violin. We have an amusing glimpse into the life of the itinerant minstrel in the poem of Colin Muset, quoted p. 67.

The Song of Roland itself is an admirable example The Song of the myth-making power of the popular imagina- of Roland. tion. On August 15, 778, on the morrow of an expedition of Charlemagne against the Saracens of Spain, the rear-guard of the retiring army was overwhelmed in the valley of Roncevaux, in the Pyrenees, by local tribes, and was cut off to a man. 'In this battle,' says Eginhard, the chronicler of the life of Charlemagne, 'Roland, warden of the marches of Brittany, with many others, was slain.' That is the kernel of historic truth which lies at the heart of the Song of Roland. Of Roland himself history has left no further record. In the popular tradition

¹ i.e. 'finders', a word with which English readers are more familiar in the form current in the Southern dialects, troubadour.

² Lat. joculator, Eng. juggler.

he became the nephew of Charlemagne, and the 'right hand of his body'. He was furnished with a comrade, Oliver, brave like himself, but prudent as well as brave; with them was associated Turpin, one of those warrior-bishops familiar in the Middle Ages, on whom the casque sat as lightly as the mitre, who wielded the lance with greater zest than the crosier; the defeat was minimized by being attributed to the machinations of a traitor, Ganelon; a bloody vengeance was imagined for it; and the whole argument was lifted to a higher plane by the transmutation of the meaningless conflict into a capital incident in the secular strife between the Crescent and the Cross.

The Song of Roland and the Iliad.

The comparison of the Song of Roland with the Iliad is inevitable. The resemblances, both superficial and deep-seated, force themselves on the attention. But such a comparison can only serve to accentuate the unapproachable supremacy of the Greek poem. It would indeed not be difficult to admit that in the Song of Roland the genius of the French people has created material which by a happy concourse of circumstances might have been wrought up into an epic worthy to rival with the Iliad. But the immaturity alone of the language in which it was conceived, a language rude and unmusical, almost incapable of rising to the expression of any but material conceptions, would have forbidden it any such high destiny. And in psychological insight the bard who sang the death of Roland is as inferior to the singer of the wrath of Achilles as the child to the man. He is almost wholly objective. There is no probing of the problems of human destiny, no laying bare of the heart of man. Of the graces of style, of poetic ornament, we find in the Song of Roland scarcely a trace. It is a plain tale of stirring events, told in a simple and straightforward manner. There is as great an interval between the Song of Roland and the *Iliad* as between a cyclopean arch of rudely up-piled masonry and the artistic workmanship of the Parthenon. But such an archway forms no unimposing entrance to that city of varied and stately architecture which is French literature.

One word upon the authorship of the Roland, Authorif only because that one word will incline its English ship of the readers to approach it with peculiar sympathy. Roland. Of the author nothing, not even the name, is known with any certainty. The poem is approximately contemporary with the Norman Conquest, and may have been, though this is unlikely, the actual song with which the heroic Taillefer led the army of William to victory at Hastings. It is, at any rate in the form in which we possess it, in the Norman dialect, and one who is well entitled to speak thinks it probable that, if not indeed actually written in England, it was at least written by one who had been in England, by one of the Normans who 'came over with the Conqueror'. Thus we, who are children of the conquerors no less than of the conquered, are by right of birth part-inheritors in the fine old poem. In the problem of its authorship it presents a curious parallel with the Beowulf, which too, if not actually written in England, as has been maintained, was at least brought over by the English invaders as a precious heirloom from their northern home. It is not without significance for the high poetic destinies of our race that the two stocks from whose fusion it has sprung should each have possessed, at the outset of their joint career, a poem so profoundly stamped with the imprint of its own characteristics and at the same time of such sterling poetic merit as are these two epics, which stand like two mighty columns on the very threshold of our literature.

LA CHANSON DE ROLAND 1

(The poem is divided into stanzas, known as *laisses*, of unequal length, the link which binds together each *laisse* being the *assonance*. Assonance is constituted by the identity of the vowel sounds on which the accent rests; it differs from rhyme in the fact that in the latter the identity extends to the following consonant. The line contains ten syllables, the mute e at the end of the line, and after the fourth syllable, where the caesura always falls, being hypermetrical.)

For seven years Charles has warred upon the Saracens in Spain, and Marsile, the Saracen king, finding himself reduced to the utmost straits, sends envoys to make terms with him. He will send him costly gifts, lions and dogs, camels and hawks, and four hundred mules laden with gold and silver. He will follow Charles to Aix-la-Chapelle, where he will accept the Christian faith, and do homage for his lands. Meanwhile he will give hostages in pledge of his good faith.

The envoys ride forth on their errand, mounted on white mules, whose bridles are of silver and their saddles of gold, and bearing branches of olive in their hands. They find the Emperor in a great orchard near Cordova, seated in the midst of his knights on a chair of massy gold, beneath a pine. His beard is white, and white his head with the snow-white blossoms of age. Goodly is he of body and proud of mien-no need to point him out to those who seek him. Before making answer to Marsile, Charles, like a true feudal lord, takes counsel with his liegemen. Roland is for war to the bitter end. Ganelon would close with a good bargain. Naimes, the Nestor of our poem, counsels mercy, and the gathering acclaims his counsel. But who shall be ambassador to Marsile? 'Give me the glove and the staff,' cries Naimes. But the Emperor swears by his beard and moustaches he will not be parted from his wise old counsellor. Then Roland will go. But he is too headstrong for so tickle an affair: if it please the King, Oliver would rather take the risk himself. Archbishop Turpin would fain go and speak hometruths to the Saracen. At length Roland proposes Ganelon, his

¹ The Extracts and the Modern French Version are reproduced from the edition of M. Léon Gautier, by the kind permission of Messrs. Alfred Mame et Fils, Tours.

step-father: they cannot send a better man. The gathering acclaims, and the Emperor assents.

The workings of the mind of Ganelon are not laid bare with any subtle psychological skill. Apparently he sees in Roland's proposal only a treacherous contrivance to send him to certain death. He angrily accepts the office, and departs breathing vengeance against Roland. It was remarked as an evil omen that when the Emperor handed him the token of his office the glove fell to earth between them.

At the Court of Marsile the black web of treason is quickly woven. Ganelon will contrive that the rear-guard, whereby the Emperor covers his return march across the Pyrenees, shall be under the command of Roland. Let Marsile fall upon it with an overwhelming force, whilst it is still entangled in the mountaingorges, and let him but cut off Roland, and he has cut off the Emperor's right arm. Shorn of him, he will no more make war on Spain. Both parties confirm the bargain by an oath, Ganelon swearing on the relics in his sword-hilt, and Marsile on the book of the law of Mahomet and Termagaunt, and the traitor departs. loaded with gifts.

Roland shrewdly judges that it is not out of love to him that Ganelon seeks for him the post of honour and danger in the rearguard. But he accepts eagerly. 'Traitor,' he cries, 'haply thou thinkest I shall let fall the glove as thou didst. Yet needs must I love thee, that thou hast caused the rear-guard to be given to me. The king that holds France shall lose naught thereby; nor palfrey nor battle-steed, nor mule nor pad nor pack-horse nor sumpter, but it shall be paid for with good swordstrokes.' The Emperor would fain give him the half of his army. 'Not so,' cries Roland. 'May God confound me if I bely my breed! Twenty thousand of the French alone will I keep, twenty thousand valiant men. In safety shall ye pass the defiles, nor, whilst I live, shall ye fear for a single man.' His fellow paladins range themselves by Roland's side, Oliver first of all, then Gerin and Gerier, Otho and Bérengier, Samson and Anseis, Ive and Ivoire, Girard de Roussillon with Engelier the Gascon. 'By my head,' cries the Archbishop, 'I will go too.' 'And I with you,' cries the Count Gautier, and they choose amongst them the twenty thousand warriors. With these they occupy the points of vantage amongst the mountains, and so the vanguard reaches the valley of Roncevaux.

The Main Body of the Army passes the Defiles.

Hautes sont les montagnes, et ténébreuses les vallées; La roche est noire, terribles sont les défilés. Ce jour même, les Français y passèrent, non sans grande douleur:

A quinze lieues de là on entendit le bruit de leur marche. Mais, lorsqu'en se dirigeant vers la grande Terre¹ Ils virent la Gascogne, le pays de leur seigneur, Alors il leur souvint de leurs fiefs et de leurs domaines, Des jeunes filles et de leurs nobles femmes, Et il n'en est pas un qui ne pleure de tendresse. Mais, entre tous, le plus angoisseux, c'est Charles, Qui a laissé son neveu aux défilés d'Espagne. Il est pris de douleur, et ne se peut empêcher de pleurer.

Les douze Pairs sont restés en Espagne: Vingt mille Français sont en leur compagnie.

Halt sunt li pui e li val tenebrus,
Les roches bises, li destreit merveillus.
Le jur passerent Franceis à grant dulur:
De quinze liwes en ot hum la rimur.
Pois que il vienent à la Tere majur,
Virent Guascuigne la tere lur seignur.
Dunc lur remembret des fieus e des honurs
E des pulceles e des gentilz uixurs:
Cel n'en i ad ki de pitiet ne plurt.
Sur tuz les altres est Carles anguissus:
As porz d'Espaigne ad laissiet sun nevuld.
Pitiet l'en prent, ne poet muer n'en plurt.

Li duze Per sunt remés en Espaigne : Vint milie Francs unt en la lur cumpaigne.

¹ France.

Ils n'ont pas peur et ne craignent point la mort. Quant à l'Empereur, il s'en retourne en France. Il pleure de ses yeux, et tire sa barbe blanche; Sous son manteau se cache.

A son côté chevauche le duc Naimes:

- 'Quelle pensée vous pèse?' dit-il au Roi.
- 'Le demander,' répondit Charles, 'c'est me faire outrage.
- 'J'ai si grand deuil qu'il me faut pleurer:
- 'Par Ganelon France sera détruite.
- 'Cette nuit, je vis, dans une vision d'ange,
- 'Je vis Ganelon me briser ma lance entre les mains,
- 'Ce même Ganelon qui fit mettre mon neveu à l'arrièregarde.
- 'Et j'ai dû laisser Roland en un pays étranger.
- 'Si je perds un tel homme, ô mon Dieu, je n'en trouverai jamais le pareil!'

Nen unt poür ne de murir dutance.
Li Emperere s'en repairet en France;
Pluret des oilz, tiret sa barbe blanche,
Suz sun mantel en fait la cuntenance.
Dejuste lui chevalchet li dux Naimes,
E dit à l'Rei: 'De quei avez pesance?'
Carles respunt: 'Tort fait ki l'me demandet.

- 'Si grant doel ai ne puis muer ne me pleigne.
- 'Par Guenelun serat destruite France:
- 'Enoit m'avint, par l'avisiun d'un angle,
- 'Qu'entre mes puignz me depeçout ma hanste,
- 'Ki mun nevuld jugat à rere-guarde.
- 'Jo l'ai laissiet en une estrange marche.
- 'Deus! se jo l'pert, ja n'en avrai escange.'

Meanwhile Marsile has assembled four hundred thousand men, and they have ridden in hot haste over mount and valley until

they have caught a glimpse of the gonfalons of the rear-guard of the French. Eagerly, with loud vauntings, they arm for battle. Their armour flashes in the sun, a thousand clarions ring shrill. Great is the din, and it reaches the ears of the French. 'Sir Comrade,' says Oliver, 'methinks we shall have battle with the Saracens.' 'God grant it!' says Roland. 'It behoves us here to make a stand for our King. It is meet that for his lord a man bear great distress, that he suffer for him great heat and great cold, that he forfeit for him both hair and hide. Now let each man see to it that he strike great blows!'

The Beginning of the Battle.

Olivier monte sur une hauteur: Il regarde à droite parmi le val herbu Et voit venir toute l'armée païenne. Il appelle son compagnon Roland:

- 'Ah!' dit-il, 'du côté de l'Espagne, quel bruit j'entends venir!
- ' Que de blancs hauberts! que de heaumes flamboyants!
- 'Nos Français vont en avoir grande ire.1
- 'Cette trahison est l'œuvre de Ganelon, ce félon ;
- 'C'est lui qui nous fit donner cette besogne par l'Empereur.'

Oliviers muntet desur un pui halçur: Guardet suz destre par mi un val herbus, Si veit venir cele gent paienur. Si 'n apelat Rollant sun cumpaignun:

- 'Devers Espaigne vei venir tel bruur,
- 'Tanz blanes osberes, tans helmes flambius!
- 'Icist ferunt noz Franceis grant irur.
- 'Guenes li fel en ad fait traïsun
- 'Ki nus jugat devant l'Empereür.'

¹ Archaic for colère, Lat. ira.

'— Tais-toi, Olivier,' répond le comte Roland; 'C'est mon beau-père: n'en sonne plus mot.'

Olivier est monté sur une colline élevée:
De là il découvre le royaume d'Espagne
Et le grand assemblement des Sarrasins.
Les heaumes luisent, tout couverts d'or et de pierreries,
Et les écus, et les hauberts brodés,
Et les épieux, et les gonfanons au bout des lances.
Olivier ne peut compter les bataillons;
Il y en a tant, qu'il n'en sait la quantité!
En lui-même il en est tout égaré.
Comme il a pu, est descendu de la colline;
Est venu vers les Français, leur a tout raconté.

Olivier dit: 'J'ai vu tant de païens, 'Que nul homme n'en vit jamais plus sur la terre.

Oliviers est desur un pui muntez:
Or veit il bien d'Espaigne le regnet,
E Sarrazins ki tant sunt assemblet.
Luisent cil helme, ki ad or sunt gemmet
E cil escut e cil osberc safret
E cil espiet, cil gunfanun fermet.
Celes eschieles ne poet il acunter:
Tant en i ad que mesure n'en set.
En lui meïsme en est mult esguarez;
Cum il einz pout, de l'pui est avalez;
Vint as Franceis, tut lur ad acuntet.

Dist Oliviers: 'Jo ai paiens veüz; 'Unc mais nuls hum en tere n'en vit plus.

^{&#}x27;— Tais, Olivier,' li quens Rollanz respunt;
'Mis parrastre est: ne voeill que mot en suns.'

- 'Il y en a bien cent mille devant nous, avec leurs écus,
- 'Leurs heaumes lacés, leurs blancs hauberts,
- 'Leurs lances droites, leurs bruns épieux luisants.
- 'Vous aurez bataille, bataille comme il n'y en eut jamais.
- 'Seigneurs Français, que Dieu vous donne sa force;
- 'Et tenez ferme pour n'être point vaincus.'

Et les Français: 'Maudit qui s'enfuira,' disent-ils.

'Pas un ne vous fera défaut pour cette mort!'

Olivier dit: 'Païens ont grande force.

- 'Et nos Français, ce semble, sont bien peu.
- 'Ami Roland, sonnez de votre cor:
- 'Charles l'entendra, et fera retourner son armée.
- '- Je serais bien fou,' répond Roland;
- 'Dans la douce France, j'en perdrais ma gloire.
- 'Non, mais je frapperai grands coups de Durendal: 1

Dient Franceis: 'Dehet ait ki s'en fuit!

'Ja pur murir ne vus en faldrat uns.'

Dist Oliviers: 'Paien unt grant esforz,

- 'De noz Franceis m'i semblet aveir mult poi.
- 'Cumpainz Rollanz, kar sunez vostre corn:
- 'Si l'orrat Carles, si returnerat l'oz.'

Respunt Rollanz: 'Jo fereie que fols:

- 'En dulce France en perdreie mun los.
- 'Sempres ferrai de Durendal granz colps:

^{&#}x27;Cil devant sunt bien cent milie, ad escuz,

^{&#}x27;Helmes laciez e blancs osbercs vestuz,

^{&#}x27;Dreites cez hanstes, luisanz cez espiez bruns,

^{&#}x27;Bataille avrez, unkes mais tel ne fut.

^{&#}x27;Seignurs Franceis, de Deu aiez vertut:

^{&#}x27;El' camp estez, que ne seium vencut.'

Durendal is Roland's sword, as Excalibur was Arthur's. It was forged by Wieland the Smith, and was of invincible temper. Divers

- 'Le fer en sera sanglant jusqu'à l'or de la garde.
- 'Nos Français y frapperent aussi, et avec quel élan!
- 'Félons païens furent mal inspirés de venir aux défilés :
- 'Je vous jure que, tous, ils sont jugés à mort,'
- 'Ami Roland, sonnez votre olifant:1
- 'Charles l'entendra et fera retourner la grande armée.
- 'Le Roi et ses barons viendront à notre secours.
- '- A Dieu ne plaise,' répond Roland,
- 'Que mes parents jamais soient blâmés à cause de moi.
- 'Ni que France la douce tombe jamais dans le déshonneur!
- 'Non, mais je frapperai grands coups de Durendal.
- 'Ma bonne épée, que j'ai ceinte à mon côté.
- 'Sanglenz en iert li branz entresqu'à l'or.
- 'Nostre Franceis i ferrunt ad esforz:
- 'Felun paien mar i vindrent as porz:
- 'Jo vus plevis, tuit sunt jugiet à mort,'
- 'Cumpainz Rollanz, l'olifant kar sunez.
- 'Si l'orrat Carles, fera l'ost returner:
- 'Succurrat nus li Reis od sun barnet.'
- Respunt Rollanz: 'Ne placet Damne Deu
- 'Que mi parent pur mei seient blasmet,
- 'Ne France dulce ja chedet en viltet.
- 'Einz i ferrai de Durendal asez.
- 'Ma bone espée que ai ceint à l'costet;

legends relate how it came into the possession of Charlemagne, who was bidden by an angel to give it to the bravest amongst his captains.

And thus it passed to Roland.

¹ As Durendal was unique among swords, so was the Olifant amongst horns. It was of ivory, whence its name (Olifant means 'ivory', and is derived from 'elephant'). Its voice was of miraculous range, as we learn when Roland does at last condescend to wind it.

- 'Vous en verrez tout le fer ensanglanté.
- 'Félons païens sont assemblés ici pour leur malheur:
- 'Je vous jure qu'ils sont tous condamnés à mort.'
- 'Ami Roland, sonnez votre olifant.
- 'Le son en ira jusqu'à Charles, qui passe aux défilés,
- 'Et les Français, je vous le jure, retourneront sur leurs pas.
- '- A Dieu ne plaise,' répond Roland,
- 'Qu'il soit jamais dit par aucun homme vivant
- 'Que j'ai sonné mon cor à cause des païens!
- 'Je ne ferai pas aux miens ce déshonneur.
- 'Mais quand je serai dans la grande bataille,
- 'J'y frapperai mille et sept cents coups:
- 'De Durendal vous verrez le fer tout sanglant.
- 'Français sont bons: ils frapperont en braves;
- 'Les Sarrasins ne peuvent échapper à la mort.'
- 'Tut en verrez le brant ensanglantet.
- 'Felun paien mar i sunt asemblet;
- 'Jo vus plevis, tuit sunt à mort livret,'
- 'Cumpainz Rollanz, sunez vostre olifant:
- 'Si l'orrat Carles ki est az porz passant;
- 'Jo vus plevis, ja returnerunt Franc.
- '- Ne placet Deu,' ço li respunt Rollanz,
- 'Que ço seit dit de nul hume vivant
- 'Que pur païens ja seie-jo cornant!
- 'Ja n'en avrunt reproece mi parent.
- ' Quant jo serai en la bataille grant
- 'Jo i ferrai e mil colps e set cenz,
- 'De Durendal verrez l'acier sanglent.
- 'Franceis sunt bon, si ferrunt vassalment:
- 'Ja cil d'Espaigne n'avrunt de mort guarant.

- '- Je ne vois pas où serait le déshonneur,' dit Olivier.
- 'J'ai vu, j'ai vu les Sarrasins d'Espagne;
- 'Les vallées, les montagnes en sont couvertes;
- 'Et les landes aussi, et toutes les plaines.
- 'Qu'elle est puissante, l'armée de la gent étrangère,
- 'Et que petite est notre compagnie!
- '— Tant mieux,' répond Roland, 'mon ardeur s'en accroît.
- 'Ne plaise à Dieu, ni à ses très saints anges,
- 'Que France, à cause de moi, perde de sa valeur!
- 'Plutôt la mort que le déshonneur.
- 'Plus nous frappons, plus l'Empereur nous aime!'

Dist Oliviers: 'D'iço ne sai jo blasme.

- 'Jo ai veüt les Sarrazins d'Espaigne:
- 'Cuvert en sunt li val e les muntaignes,
- 'E li lariz e trestutes les plaignes.
- 'Granz sunt les oz de cele gent estrange;
- 'Nus i avum mult petite cumpaigne.'

Respunt Rollanz: 'Mis talenz en est graindre

- 'Ne placet Deu ne ses seintismes angles
- 'Que ja pur mei perdet sa valur France!
- 'Mielz voeill murir qu'à huntage remaigne.
- 'Pur bien ferir l'Emperere nus aimet.'

Roland harangues the French host, Turpin shrives them and promises them Paradise, and shouting their battle-cry, Monjoie! they hurl themselves upon the foe. The battle resolves itself into a series of single combats, painted with Homeric gusto. Shields are shattered, hauberks rent asunder, lances splintered, pennons torn to shreds; the spears crash through shield and mail and bury the streaming pennons in the flesh of the foe, the swords cleave man and horse asunder; the bright blood flows in streams down on the green grass. Roland is red with blood, red his hauberk, red his arms, red his shoulders and the neck of

his horse. The French ride in blood up to the waist; the warriors heap insults on the head of their vanquished foes, they exult in the fierce joy of battle and acclaim with glad cries of triumph every heroic stroke. Demons lie in wait for the souls of the infidels, but angels bear away the souls of the Christian warriors to rest amid the holy flowers of Paradise. Meanwhile the elements are stirred in sympathy with the strife, wind and thunder, rain and hail; the lightnings flash in quick succession; the solid earth quakes; over all France, from Mount Saint Michael to Cologne, from Besançon to Wissant, there is not a city but sees its walls rent asunder, darkness veils the sky, thick darkness without a gleam, save when lightning rends the veil. 'It is the end of the world!' cry the affrighted peoples. 'It is the Day of Doom!' The truth they know not—it is the mourning for the death of Roland.

For the end approaches. Of the twelve infidel peers ten are slain, the fields are strewn with Saracen corpses, but ever new hosts throng forth from the mountain-gorges. The French knights take leave of one another with a last kiss. And now at length Roland's pride bends. He will wind his horn and Charles will hear. 'Too late,' is Oliver's bitter reproach. 'Too late indeed,' echoes the Archbishop Turpin, 'yet let Roland wind his horn. It cannot save us, but it will summon Charles to avenge us, and to give us Christian burial, that we be not devoured of dogs and wild-boars and wolves.' So Roland sets the horn to his lips, and blows a mighty blast, till the crimson blood rushes from his mouth and his temples burst with the strain. But the voice of the horn re-echoes from valley to valley, and Charles hears it thirty leagues away, and the main army retraces its march in an anguish of fear.

Meanwhile the French are hard pressed. Oliver falls, pierced from behind by a Saracen spear. Turpin falls; the Emperor finds his body afterwards, surrounded by four hundred hacked corpses of the infidels. And now Roland knows that death is near him. With the Olifant in one hand and Durendal in the other he drags himself to a grassy knoll, where between two stately trees are three blocks of marble. There he swoons on the green grass. A Saracen, who is shamming death amid a heap of the slain, spies him. 'Vanquished,' he cries, 'he is vanquished, the nephew of Charles!' and thereupon seizes Durendal, and pulls

Roland's beard. But the dying lion turns on the infidel dog, and dashes out his brains with a blow of the Olifant. Yet the hero is haunted with the fear lest his good Durendal, the trusty blade that has never failed him in a hundred fights, fall into the hands of a coward. He is fain to shatter it to pieces before he dies. Once and again he smites with it on a dark rock. The steel grides, but is not shivered, nay, nor yet dinted. He essays a third time.

THE DEATH OF ROLAND

Pour la troisième fois Roland frappe sur une pierre bise : Plus en abat que je ne saurais dire.

L'acier grince ; il ne rompt pas :

L'épée remonte en amont vers le ciel.

Quand le Comte s'aperçoit qu'il ne la peut briser,

Tout doucement il la plaint en lui-même :

- 'Ma Durendal, comme tu es belle et sainte!
- 'Dans ta garde dorée il y a bien des reliques:
- 'Une dent de saint Pierre, du sang de saint Basile,
- 'Des cheveux de monseigneur saint Denis,
- 'Du vêtement de la vierge Marie.
- 'Non, non, ce n'est pas droit que païens te possèdent.

Rollanz ferit en une pierre bise: Plus en abat que jo ne vus sai dire.

L'espée cruist, ne fruisset ne ne briset,

Cuntre le ciel amunt est resortie.

Quant veit li Quens que ne la freindrat mie,

- Mult dulcement la pleinst à sei meïsme : 'E! Durendal, cum ies bele e seintisme!
- 'En l'orie punt asez i ad reliques:
- 'Un dent seint Pierre e de l'sanc seint Basilie,
- 'E des chevels mun seignur seint Denise;
- 'De l'vestement i ad seinte Marie.
- 'Il nen est dreiz que païen te baillisent:

- 'Tu ne dois être servie que par des mains chrétiennes.
- 'Combien de batailles j'aurai par toi menées à fin,
- 'Combien de terres j'aurai par toi conquises,
- ' Que tient Charles à la barbe fleurie
- 'Et qui sont aujourd'hui la puissance et la richesse de l'Empereur!
- 'Plaise à Dieu que tu ne tombes pas aux mains d'un lâche!
- 'Que Dieu n'inflige point cette honte à la France!'

Roland sent que la mort l'entreprend Et qu'elle lui descend de la tête sur le cœur. Il court se jeter sous un pin : Sur l'herbe verte il se couche face contre terre ; Il met sous lui son olifant et son épée, Il se tourne la tête contre les païens. Et pourquoi le fait-il ? Ah! c'est qu'il veut

Ço sent Rollanz que la mort l'entreprent: Jus de la teste sur le coer li descent. Desuz un pin i est alez curant, Sur l'herbe verte s'i est culchiez adenz; Desuz lui met s'espée e l'olifant. Turnat sa teste vers la paiene gent: Pur ço l'ad fait que il voelt veirement

^{&#}x27;De chrestiens devez estre servie.

^{&#}x27;Tantes batailles de vus avrai fenies,

^{&#}x27;Mult larges teres de vus avrai cunquises

^{&#}x27; Que Carles tient, ki la barbe ad flurie,

^{&#}x27;E l'Emperere en est e ber e riches.

^{&#}x27;Ne vus ait hum ki facet cuardie!

^{&#}x27;Deus, ne laissier que France en seit hunie!'

Faire dire à Charlemagne et à toute l'armée des Francs, Le noble comte, qu'il est mort en conquérant. Il bat sa coulpe, il répète son mea culpa. Pour ses péchés, au ciel il tend son gant : Les Anges de Dieu descendent d'en haut et, sans retard. le recoivent.

Roland sent que son temps est fini. Il est là, au sommet d'un pic qui regarde l'Espagne : D'une main il frappe sa poitrine:

- 'Mea culpa. 1 mon Dieu, et pardon au nom de ta puissance.
- 'Pour mes péchés, pour les petits et pour les grands, 'Pour tous ceux que j'ai faits depuis l'heure de ma naistance
- 'Jusqu'à ce jour où je suis ainsi frappé.' Il tend à Dieu le gant de sa main droite.2 Et voici que les Anges du ciel s'abattent près de lui.

Que Carles diet e trestute sa gent, Li gentilz quens, qu'il fut morz cunquerant. Cleimet sa culpe e menut e suvent. Pur ses pecchiez Deu puroffrit le guant : Le Angle Deu le pristrent erraument.

Co sent Rollanz de sun tens n'i ad plus: Devers Espaigne gist en un pui agut. A l'une main si ad sun piz batut :

- 'Deus! meie culpe par la tue vertut,
- 'De mes pecchiez, des granz e des menuz,
- ' Que jo ai fait dès l'ure que nez fui
- 'Tresqu'à cest jur que ci sui consouz!' Sun destre guant en ad vers Deu tendut: Angle de l'ciel i descendent à lui.

The formula which prefaces a confession of one's sins.
 Token of submission to a feudal overlord.

Il est là, gisant sous un pin, le comte Roland :

Il a voulu se tourner du côté de l'Espagne.
Il se prit alors à se souvenir de plusieurs choses:
De tous les pays qu'il a conquis,
Et de douce France, et des gens de sa famille,
Et de Charlemagne, son seigneur, qui l'a nourri;
Et des Français qui lui étaient si dévoués.
Il ne peut s'empêcher d'en pleurer et de soupirer.
Mais il ne veut pas se mettre lui-même en oubli,
Et, de nouveau, réclame le pardon de Dieu:
'O notre vrai Père,' dit-il, 'qui jamais ne mentis,
'Qui ressuscitas saint Lazare d'entre les morts
'Et défendis Daniel contre les lions,
'Sauve, sauve mon âme et défends-la contre tous périls,
'A cause des péchés que j'ai faits en ma vie.'
Il a tendu à Dieu le gant de sa main droite:

Li quens Rollanz se jut desuz un pin: Envers Espaigne en ad turnet sun vis... De plusurs choses à remembrer li prist : De tantes teres que li ber ad cunquis. De dulce France, des humes de sun lign, De Carlemagne, sun seignur, ki l'nurrit, E des Franceis dunt il esteit si fiz. Ne poet muer n'en plurt e ne suspirt. Mais lui meïsme ne voelt metre en ubli; Cleimet sa culpe, si priet Deu mercit: 'Veire paterne, ki unkes ne mentis. 'Seint Lazarun de mort resurrexis 'E Daniel des leuns guaresis. Guaris de mei l'anme de tuz perilz Pur les pecchiez que en ma vie fis! Sun destre guant à Deu en puroffrit.

Saint Gabriel l'a reçu.

Alors sa tête s'est inclinée sur son bras,
Et il est allé, mains jointes, à sa fin.
Dieu lui envoie un de ses anges chérubins,
Saint Raphaël et saint Michel du Péril.
Saint Gabriel est venu avec eux.
Ils emportent l'âme du Comte au paradis.

E de sa main seinz Gabriel l'ad pris. Desur sun braz teneit le chief enclin: Juintes ses mains est alez à sa fin. Deus li tramist sun angle cherubin, Seint Raphael, seint Michiel de l'Peril. Ensemble od els seinz Gabriel i vint. L'anme de l'Cunte portent en pareïs.

With the death of Roland is reached the climax of the poem. and what would perhaps have been the most artistic breaking-off point. But national pride and the primitive sense of poetic justice required that all accounts should be settled before the poem was brought to a close. Into the details of the vengeance taken by Charles upon the infidels, of the trial of Ganelon by ordeal of battle and his punishment, and of the obsequies of the slaughtered heroes, we shall not follow the bard. But one episode claims a passing notice, by reason of its being the only place in the poem in which a woman is brought on the scene. In the rude, fierce life of these early feudal times the only field of action for woman is the home, her only share in the bloody drama is to welcome the victor and to mourn the slain. When Charles returns to his palace at Aix, a fair damsel hastens to meet him. It is la belle Aude. 'Where is Roland the captain,' she asks, 'who swore to take me to wife?' Charles is filled with grief and anguish: he weeps, he tears his white beard. 'Sister, dear friend,' he says, 'thou askest me news of a man dead. I will make good to thee the loss of Roland. I will give thee Louis, my son Louis,' 'Far from me be this speech,' replies the fair Aude. 'God forbid, and his saints and his angels, that I should live after Roland.' And therewith her colour fled, and she fell at Charles's feet. She was dead-God have her soul!

CHAPTER II

ROMANCES OF ADVENTURE

AKIN to the romances of the Arthurian and the antique cycles in general character, but not admitting of classification with them in respect of subjectmatter, are various romances which begin to make their appearance about the same time, and which, though largely original, contain many elements of Celtic and oriental origin. Unique amongst these stands the charming love-story of Aucassin et Nicolette, half romance of adventure, half pastoral, This precious waif, cast ashore by the whim of chance like some winsome Perdita, from amongst so much literary flotsam and jetsam which has perished irrecoverably in the ocean of time, survives to us in a single manuscript, and bears with it no indication of its origin save such as may be gathered from internal evidence, which is next to nothing. In the form in which we possess it it bears the imprint of the Picard dialect, a form of speech closely allied to the Norman dialect of the Chanson de Roland. but from this circumstance no conclusion can be drawn as to its origin, for the popular romances passed freely from one dialect into another. The scene is laid in the south of France, of which, however, the author would not seem to have had any first-hand knowledge. The story is doubtless of oriental origin, and a variant of it occurs in the romance of Flore et Blancheflore. It dates from the twelfth century, and its style, lively, touching, natural and picturesque, marks it out from its contemporaries, and indeed entitles it to be considered as one of the chefs-d'œuvre of mediaeval

literature. In the manuscript it is described as a *chante-fable*, by which description it is indicated that the story is partly to be sung and partly to be recited.

AUCASSIN ET NICOLETTE

Of the Love that was between Aucassin and Nicolette.

Aucassin, the son of Count Garin de Beaucaire, a handsome and shapely youth endowed with all the virtues, is so sorely smitten with the love of Nicolette that he has no heart for any of the knightly exercises befitting his rank. Now this Nicolette was a Saracen captive, bought as a slave by the viscount of the city, and by him adopted as his daughter. Neither by rank nor by her childhood's faith was she a fit mate for Aucassin, who might have aspired to the hand of a king's daughter. But in Aucassin's eyes, were she Empress of Constantinople or of Germany, Queen of France or of England, 'it would be very little for her, so noble is she, so honest and good, and endowed with all virtues.' By the contrivance of the father of Aucassin the two lovers are cast into prison, apart.¹

Of the Flight of Nicolette.

Donc, Aucassin fut mis en prison, comme vous l'avez ouï et entendu, et Nicolette étoit d'autre part en sa chambre. C'étoit le temps de l'été, au mois de mai, où les jours sont longs, et les nuits tranquilles et douces. Nicolette étoit couchée sur son lit. Elle vit la lune luire

Aucassins fu mis en prison si com vos avés oi et entendu, et Nicolete fu d'autre part en le cambre. Ce fu el tans d'esté, el mois de mai, que li jor sont caut, lonc et cler, et les nuis coies et series. Nicolete jut une nuit en son lit, si vit la lune luire cler par une fenestre, et si oi le lorseilnol

¹ The extracts are from the version in Modern French of A. Bida and from the Old French text of Gaston Paris. They are here reproduced by the kind permission of the owners of the French rights, granted through Messrs. Hachette and Co.

clair par la fenêtre et elle entendit le rossignol chanter dans le iardin, et il lui souvint d'Aucassin, son ami, qu'elle aimoit tant. Elle se mit à réfléchir au comte Garin de Beaucaire qui la haïssoit cruellement : elle pensa qu'elle ne pouvoit pas rester là, que si quelqu'un la dénonçoit et que le comte Garin vînt à le savoir, il la feroit mourir de male mort. Elle vit que la vieille qui étoit avec elle dormoit. Elle se leva, se vêtit d'un trèsbon sarrau de drap de soie qu'elle avoit, prit les draps de son lit et des nappes, les noua ensemble, fit une corde aussi longue qu'elle put, l'attacha au pilier de la fenêtre. et se laissa glisser en bas dans le jardin. Elle prit son vêtement d'une main par devant et de l'autre par derrière, et releva sa robe à cause de la rosée qu'elle vit sur l'herbe, et s'en alla le long du jardin. Elle avoit les cheveux blonds et frisés en petites boucles, et les veux vairs et riants, et le visage délicat, et le nez haut et bien

canter en garding, si li sovint d'Aucassin son ami qu'ele tant amoit. Ele se comença a porpenser del conte Garin de Biaucaire qui de mort le haoit; si se pensa qu'ele ne remanroit plus ilec, que s'ele estoit acusée et li quens Garins le savoit, il le feroit de male mort morir. Ele senti que li vielle dormoit qui aveuc li estoit. Ele se leva, si vesti un bliaut de drap de soie que ele avoit molt bon, si prist dras de lit et touailes, si noua l'un a l'autre, si fist une corde si longe conme ele pot, si le noua au piler de le fenestre, si s'avala contreval le gardin; et prist se vesture a l'une main devant et a l'autre deriére, si s'escorça por le rousée qu'ele vit grande sor l'erbe, si s'en ala aval le gardin. Ele avoit les caviaus blons et menus recercelés, et les eus vairs et rians, et le face traitice, et le nés haut et bien assis, et les levretes ver-

planté, et les lèvres vermeillettes plus que cerises et que rose au temps de l'été, et les dents blanches et menues. et elle étoit si mince de la ceinture qu'on eût pu l'enclore en deux mains; et les fleurs des marguerites qu'elle brisoit sous les doigts de ses pieds et qui se renversoient par-dessus, paroissoient toutes noires en comparaison de ses pieds et de ses jambes, tant étoit blanche la fillette. Elle vint à la porte de derrière, la defferma et sortit dans les rues de Beaucaire le long de l'ombre, car la lune étoit brillante. Et elle marcha tant qu'elle arriva à la tour où étoit son ami. La tour étoit crevassée 1 de loin en loin, et elle se blottit contre l'un des piliers. Elle s'enveloppa de sa mante, et mit sa tête dans une crevasse de la tour, qui étoit vieille. Or, elle entendit Aucassin qui, là-dedans, pleuroit et menoit grand deuil, et regrettoit sa douce amie qu'il aimoit tant; et quand elle l'eut assez écouté, elle lui parla.

mellettes plus que n'est cerisse ne rose el tans d'esté, et les dens blans et menus; et estoit graille parmi les flans, qu'en vos deus mains le peusciés enclorre; et les flors des margerites qu'ele ronpoit as orteus de ses piés, qui li gissoient sor le menuisse du pié par deseure, estoient droites noires avers ses piés et ses ganbes, tant par estoit blance la mescinete. Ele vint au postic, si le deffrema, si s'en isci parmi les rues de Biaucaire par devers l'onbre, car la lune luisoit molt clére, et erra tant qu'ele vint a le tor u ses amis estoit. Li tors estoit faelée de lius en lius, et ele se quatist delés l'un des pilers, si s'estraint en son mantel, si mist sen cief parmi une creveure de la tor qui vielle estoit et anciienne, si oi Aucassin qui la dedens plouroit et faisoit molt grant dol et regretoit se douce amie que tant amoit; et quant ele l'ot assés escouté, si commença a dire.

¹ The translation has flanquée de tours.

Of the Converse that Nicolette held with Aucassin in his Prison

The prose narrative now passes into a song. Nicolette of the bright face, leaning against the pillar, hears Aucassin within, weeping and bewailing his love. 'Gentle sir,' says Nicolette, 'valiant and honoured youth, what boots it to weep and wail? I can never be yours. Your father hates me, and all your kin. For your sake I will cross the sea into a strange land.' And the maiden cuts off a tress of her hair, and passes it to her lover through the chink in the wall. Aucassin kisses and caresses it and lays it in his breast. Then he seeks to dissuade Nicolette from her project of flight, and the lovers fall to disputing whether of them loves the other best.

How Nicolette was in danger of being surprised by the Watch, and how she was warned by the Sentinel.

Pendant qu'Aucassin et Nicolette devisoient ainsi, les gardes de la ville venoient le long de la rue, leurs épées tirées sous leurs capes, car le comte Garin leur avoit donné ordre que, s'ils pouvoient se saisir de Nicolette, ils la missent à mort. Et la sentinelle qui étoit sur la tour les vit venir et entendit qu'ils alloient parlant de Nicolette et qu'ils menaçoient de la tuer.

— Dieu! fait-elle, quel dommage s'ils tuoient si belle fillette! Ce seroit une bien bonne œuvre si je pouvois

La u Aucassins et Nicolete parloient ensanble, et les escargaites de le vile venoient tote une rue, s'avoient les espées traites desos les capes, car li quens Garins lor avoit conmandé que se il le pooient prendre qu'il l'ocesissent; et li gaite qui estoit sor le tor les vit venir, et oi qu'il aloient de Nicolete parlant, et qu'il le maneçoient a occirre.

— Dius! fait il, con grans damages de si bele mescinete s'il l'ocient! Et molt seroit grans aumosne si je la prévenir de ne pas se laisser voir et qu'elle s'en gardât. Car s'ils venoient à la tuer, Aucassin, mon damoiseau, en mourroit, ce qui seroit grand'pitié.

li pooie dire, par quoi il ne s'aperceuscent et qu'ele s'en gardast; car se l'ocient, dont iert Aucassins, mes damoisiaus, mors, dont grans damages ert.

The sentinel accordingly warns Nicolette in a song of her danger.

How Nicolette leapt from the Castle Wall.

— Hé! fit Nicolette, que l'âme de ton père et de ta mère soit en repos, toi qui m'as si gentiment et si courtoisement prévenue. S'il plaît à Dieu, je m'en garderai, et que Dieu m'en garde!

Elle se serre dans sa mante à l'ombre du pilier jusqu'à ce que les soldats aient passé outre, et elle prend congé d'Aucassin. Elle va, et arrive au pied du château. Le mur avoit été rompu, puis réparé; elle monte dessus et fait si bien qu'elle se trouve entre le mur et le fossé. Elle regarde en bas, elle voit le fossé roide et profond et elle a grand'peur.

— Hé! fait Nicolete, l'ame de ten pére et de te mére soit en beneoit repos, quant si belement et si cortoisement le m'as ore dit! Se Diu plaist, je m'en garderai bien, et Dius m'en gart!

Elle s'estraint en son mantel en l'onbre del piler, tant que cil furent passé outre, et ele prent congié a Aucassin; si s'en va tant qu'ele vint au mur del castel. Li murs fu depeciés, s'estoit rehordés, et ele monta deseure, si fist tant qu'ele fu entre le mur et le fossé, et ele garda contreval, si vit le fossé molt parfont et molt roide: s'ot molt grand poor.

— Hé! Dieu, fait-elle, douce créature! si je me laisse choir, je me casserai le col, et si je reste là, on me prendra demain et on me brûlera vive. Encore aimé-je mieux mourir ici que si tout le peuple ébahi vient demain me regarder.

Elle fit le signe de la croix sur son visage et se laissa glisser dans le fossé; et quand elle fut au fond, ses beaux pieds et ses belles mains, qui ne savoient ce que c'est que d'être blessés, furent meurtris et écorchés et le sang en sortit en plusieurs endroits, et pourtant elle ne sentit ni mal ni douleur, à cause de la grand'peur qu'elle avoit. Et si elle eut grand'peine à descendre, elle en eut bien davantage à remonter. Elle pensa qu'il ne faisoit pas bon demeurer là, et elle trouva un pieu aigu que ceux du dedans avoient jeté pour défendre le château. Elle grimpa tout doucement un pied après l'autre, si bien qu'elle arriva en haut bien péniblement. Or, il y

— Hé! Dius, fait ele, douce créature! se je me lais cair, je briseraile col; et se je remain ci,on me prendera demain, si m'ardera on en un fu. Encor aime je mix que je muire ci que tos li pules me regardast demain a merveilles.

Ele segna son cief, si se laissa glacier aval le fossé, et quant ele vint u fons, si bel pié et ses beles mains, qui n'avoient mie apris c'on les bleçast, furent quaissies et escorcies, et li sans en sali bien en doze lius; et neporquant ele ne santi ne mal ne dolor, por le grant paor qu'ele avoit. Et se ele fu en paine de l'entrer, encor fu ele en forceur de l'iscir. Ele se pensa qu'ileuc ne faisoit mie bon demorer, et trova un pel aguisié que cil dedens avoient jeté por le castel deffendre. Si fist pas un avant l'autre, tant qu'ele si monta, tout a grans paines, qu'ele vint deseure. Or estoit li forès près a deus arbalestrées,

avoit une forêt près de là, à deux portées d'arbalète, qui avoit au moins trente lieues de long et de large. Elle étoit pleine de bêtes fauves et de serpents. Elle eut peur d'être dévorée si elle y entroit, et elle songea d'autre part que si on la trouvoit là on la ramèneroit dans la ville pour la brûler vive.

qui bien duroit trente liues de lonc et de lé, si i avoit bestes sauvages et serpentine. Ele ot paor que s'ele i entroit, qu'eles ne l'ocesiscent. Si se repensa que s'on le trovoit ileue, c'on le remenroit en le vile por ardoir.

How Nicolette spent the Night in the Woods, and of her Meeting with the Shepherds.

Nicolette se désoloit, comme vous l'avez ouï; elle se recommanda à Dieu et marcha tant qu'elle vint à la forêt. Elle n'osa pas s'enfoncer beaucoup, à cause des bêtes fauves et des serpents. Elle se blottit dans un épais buisson et le sommeil la prit, et elle dormit jusqu'au matin, à l'heure où les bergers sortirent de la ville et menèrent leurs bêtes entre le bois et la rivière. Ils se rendirent tous ensemble à une belle fontaine qui étoit au bord de la forêt. Ils étendirent une cape par terre et mirent leur pain dessus. Pendant qu'ils mangeoient,

Nicolete se dementa molt, si com vos avés oi ; ele se conmanda a Diu, si erra tant qu'ele vint en le forest. Ele n'osa mie parfont entrer por les bestes sauvages et por le serpentine, si se quatist en un espès buisson, et soumaus li prist, si s'endormi dusqu'au demain a haute prime, que li pastorel iscirent de la ville, et jetérent lor bestes entre le bos et la rivière. Si se traient d'une part a une molt bele fontaine qui estoit au cief de la forest, si estendirent une cape, si missent lor pain sus. Entreus

Nicolette s'éveilla aux cris des oiseaux et des pastoureaux, et elle s'avança vers eux.

- Beaux enfants, fit-elle, Dame-Dieu 1 vous aide!
- Dieu vous bénisse! fit l'un d'eux, qui avoit la langue plus déliée que les autres.
- Beaux enfants, connoissez-vous Aucassin, le fils du comte Garin de Beaucaire?
 - Oui bien le connoissons-nous.
- Si Dieu vous aide, beaux enfants, dites-lui qu'il y a une bête dans cette forêt, qu'il vienne la chasser, et que s'il pouvoit la prendre, il n'en donneroit pas un membre pour cent marcs d'or, ni pour cinq cents, ni pour rien.

Et ils la regardèrent, et ils la virent si belle, qu'ils en furent tout émerveillés

- Que je lui dise ? fit celui qui avoit la langue la plus

qu'il mengoient, et Nicolete s'esveille au cri des oisiaus et des pastoriaus, si s'enbati sor aus.

- Bel enfant, fait ele, Dame Dius vos i ait!
- Dius vos benie! fait li uns qui plus fu enparlés des autres.
- Bel enfant, fait ele, conissiés vos Aucassin le fil le conte Garin de Biaucaire?
 - Oil, bien le counisçons nos.
- Se Dius vos ait, bel enfant, fait ele, dites li qu'il a une beste en ceste forest, et qu'il le viegne cacier, et s'il l'i puet prendre, il n'en donroit mie un membre por cent mars d'or, ne por cinc cenz, ne por nul avoir.

Et cil le regardent, si le virent si bele qu'il en furent tot esmari.

- Je li dirai? fait cil qui plus fu enparlés des autres;

¹ Archaic, from Dominus Deus.

déliée. Malheur à celui qui le lui dira! Vous ne dites que des mensonges, car il n'y a si précieuse bête en cette forêt, ni cerf, ni lion, ni sanglier, dont un des membres vaille plus de deux deniers ou trois au plus; et vous parlez d'une si grosse somme! Malheur à qui vous croit et qui le lui dira! Vous êtes fée. Aussi n'avons-nous cure de votre compagnie, et passez votre chemin.

- Ha! beaux enfants, fit-elle, vous le ferez. La bête a une telle vertu qu'Aucassin sera guéri de son tourment. Et j'ai ici cinq sols dans une bourse. Prenez-les et dites-le-lui, et il faut qu'il chasse la bête dans trois jours; et si dans trois jours il ne la trouve, jamais ne sera guéri de son tourment.
- Ma foi, fait-il, nous prendrons les deniers, et s'il vient ici, nous le lui dirons, mais nous ne l'irons pas chercher

— De par Dieu! fait-elle.

Puis elle prend congé des pastoureaux et s'en va.

de hait ait qui ja en parlera ne qui ja li dira! C'est fantosmes que vos dites, qu'il n'a si ciére beste en ceste forest, ne cierf, ne lion, ne sengler, dont uns des membres vaille plus de deus deniers u de trois au plus; et vos parlés de si grant avoir! Mal dehait qui vos en croit, ne qui ja li dira! Vos estes fée, si n'avons cure de vo compagnie, mais tenés vostre voie.

- Ha! bel enfant, fait ele, si ferés: le beste a tel mecine que Aucassins ert garis de son mehaing. Et j'ai ci cinc sols en me borse: tenés, se li dites; et dedens trois jors li covient cacier, et se il dens trois jors ne le trove, jamais n'iert garis de son mehaing.
- Par foi! fait il, les deniers prenderons nos, et s'il vient ci, nos li dirons, mais nos ne l'irons ja quere.
 - De par Diu! fait ele.

Lors prent congié as pastoriaus, si s'en va.

How Nicolette built a Bower in the Forest,

CHANT

Quand Nicolette au blanc visage Aux pastoureaux a dit adieu. D'un pas qui tremble bien un peu Elle entre sous l'épais feuillage. Elle s'achemine tout droit Par un vieux sentier fort étroit Qui la conduit en un endroit Où se divisoient plusieurs routes. Et là, seulette, elle se mit A songer, non sans quelques doutes. Tant l'amour lui trouble l'esprit, A ce que son ami va faire, Et s'il l'aime comme il le dit Or, pour l'éprouver, elle prit Des fleurs de lvs, de la fougère, Du gazon où l'herbe fleurit.

OR SE CANTE

Nicolete o le cler vis
Des pastoriaux se parti.
Si acoilli son cemin
Trés parmi le gaut foilli,
Tout un viés sentier anti,
Tant qu'a une voie vint
U aforkent set cemin
Qui s'en vont par le pais.
A porpenser or se prist
Qu'esprovera son ami,
Se l'aime si com il dist.
Ele prist des flors de lis,

Un tapis de mousse nouvelle
Et des feuilles, dont elle fit
Une hutte en tout point si belle,
Que jamais si belle on ne vit.
— Par Dieu, tout vérité, que j'ose
Attester, je jure que si
Mon doux Aucassin vient ici
Et qu'un instant ne s'y repose,
Il ne sera plus mon ami
Ni moi sa mie.

Et de l'erbe du garris,
Et de le foille autresi,
Une bele loge en fist:
Ainques tant gente ne vi.
Jure Diu qui ne menti,
Se par la vient Aucassins,
Et il, por l'amor de li,
Ne s'i repose un petit,
Ja ne sera ses amis,
N'ele s'amie.

How Aucassin rode into the Forest, and of his meeting with the Shepherds.

Meanwhile Nicolette is missed, and some say she has fled, and others that the Count Garin has had her put to death. And whoever was glad thereat, it was not Aucassin. And the Count brought him out of prison, and made a fair feast, but Aucassin moped apart. And a good knight, seeing him thus sad, counselled him to mount his horse and ride into the forest, where he would see plants and flowers, and haply he might hear such a word as he would be the better of. And Aucassin thanked him and rode forth. And upon the stroke of three hours he came to the spring and found the shepherds, eating their bread and making merry.

The Song that Aucassin heard the Shepherds sing.

CHANT

L'un des bergers se mit à dire:

— Voici venir le jeune sire,
Aucassin, notre damoiseau.
Que le bon Dieu lui soit en aide,
Et lui fasse trouver remède,
Car vraiment le garçon est beau!
Et la fillette au blanc visage,
A l'œil vair, au mignon corsage,
Étoit belle aussi, par ma foi,
Qui de sa bourse pas trop pleine
Nous a tantôt donné de quoi
Avoir des couteaux dans leur gaîne,
Et des bâtons et des gâteaux,
Et des flûtes et des pipeaux.

Dieu la bénisse!

Li uns dist: — Bel compaignet,
Dius ait Aucassinet,
Voire, a foi! le bel vallet,
Et le mescine au cors net,
Qui avoit le poil blondet,
Cler le vis, et l'oeul vairet,
Ki nos dona denerès
Dont acatrons gastelès,
Gaines et coutelès,
Flausteles et cornès,
Maçueles et pipès:
Dius le garisse!

Aucassin begs the shepherds to repeat their song. They refuse: they will sing for no man, not they! Why should they

sing if they have no mind to? But Aucassin's purse has a most persuasive tongue, and they tell him of their meeting with the maid of the bright face, and deliver her message. Aucassin rides on, thinking so much of his sweet love that he feels neither hurt nor pain, though so scratched and torn by thorns and briars that you could have followed him by the trail of his blood on the grass; but when he sees that the night is falling he falls to weeping for that he has not found her.

Of Aucassin's Meeting with the Boor.

Il chevauchoit dans une vieille route couverte d'herbe, lorsqu'il rencontra un homme tel que je vais vous le dire. Il étoit grand et merveilleusement laid et hideux: Il avoit une grande hure plus noire qu'une grillade, et il avoit plus d'une pleine paume entre les deux yeux; et il avoit de grandes joues et un très-grand nez plat, et de grandes narines larges et de grosses lèvres plus rouges qu'une charbonnée, et de grandes dents jaunes et laides. Il étoit chaussé de houseaux 1 et de souliers de cuir de bœuf entourés d'une corde grossière jusque par-dessus les genoux. Il étoit affublé d'une cape à deux envers, et il

Tote un viés voie herbeuse cevaucoit: il esgarda devant lui enmi le voie, si vit un vallet tel com je vos dirai. Grans estoit et mervelleus et lais et hideus: il avoit une grande hure plus noire qu'une carbouclée, et avoit plus de plaine paume entre deus eus; et avoit unes grandes joes et un grandisme nés plat, et unes granz narines lées, et unes grosses lévres plus rouges d'une carbounée, et uns grans dens gaunes et lais; et estoit cauciés d'uns housiaus et d'uns sollers de buef, fretés de tille dusque deseure le genol; et estoit afulés d'une cape

^{1 &#}x27;leggings', cognate with Eng. hose.

11.

s'appuyoit sur une grosse massue. Aucassin tomba sur lui à l'improviste, et il eut grand'peur quand soudain il le vit de tout près:

- Beau frère, Dieu t'aide!
- Dieu vous bénisse!
- Par Dieu, que fais-tu ici ?
- Que vous importe ?
- Rien; je ne vous le demande qu'à bonne intention.
- Mais vous, pourquoi pleurez-vous et menez-vous si grand deuil? Certes, si j'étois aussi riche que vous, rien au monde ne me feroit pleurer.
 - Bah! me connoissez-vous?
- Oui, je sais bien que vous êtes Aucassin, le fils du comte, et si vous me dites pourquoi vous pleurez, je vous dirai ce que je fais ici.
 - Certes, je vous le dirai bien volontiers. Je suis

a deus envers, si estoit apoiiés sor une grande maçue. Aucassins s'enbati sor lui, s'eut grant paor quant il le sorvit:

- Biaus frére, Dius t'i ait!
- Dius vos benie! fait cil.
- Se Dius t'ait, que fais tu ilec?
- A vos que monte ? fait cil.
- Nient, fait Aucassins: je nel vos demant se por bien non.
- Mais por quoi plourés vos, fait cil, et faites si fait duel? Certes, se j'estoie ausi rices hom que vos estes, tos li mons ne me feroit mie plorer.
 - Ba! me connissiés vos ? fait Aucassins.
- Oie, je sai bien que vos estes Aucassins, li fius le conte, et se vos me dites por quoi vos plorés, je vos dirai que je faç ci.
 - Certes, fait Aucassins, je le vos dirai molt volentiers

venu ce matin chasser dans cette forêt. J'avois un levrier blanc le plus beau du monde; je l'ai perdu et je le pleure.

- Oh! par le cœur de Notre-Seigneur, vous pleurez pour un méchant chien! Bien sot qui vous estimera, quand il n'est si riche seigneur en ce pays qui, si votre père lui en demandoit dix, quinze ou vingt, ne les lui donnât volontiers, et n'en fût heureux. Moi, j'ai le droit de pleurer et de me désespérer.
 - Toi ? et de quoi, frère ?
- Sire, je vous le dirai. J'étois loué à un riche vilain, je conduisois sa charrue attelée de quatre bœufs. Or, il y a trois jours, il m'est arrivé un grand malheur. De nos quatre bœufs, j'ai perdu le meilleur, Rouget, le meilleur de ma charrue. Et je le vais cherchant, et il y a trois jours que je n'ai mangé ni bu, et je n'ose retourner

Je ving hui matin cacier en ceste forest; s'avoie un blanc levrier, le plus bel del siecle, si l'ai perdu: por ce pleur jou.

- Os¹! fait cil, por le cuer que cil sires eut en sen ventre! que vos plorastes por un cien puant! Mal dehait ait qui jamais vos prisera, quant il n'a si rice home en ceste terre, se vos péres l'en mandoit dis u quinze u vint, qu'il ne les eust trop volentiers, et s'en esteroit trop liés Mais je doi plorer et dol faire.
 - Et tu de quoi, frère?
- Sire, je le vos dirai. J'estoie luiés a un rice vilain, si caçoie se carue, quatre bues i avoit. Or a trois jors qu'il m'avint une grande malaventure, que je perdi le mellor de mes bues, Roget, le mellor de me carue. Si le vois querant, si ne mengai ne ne buc trois jors a passés, si

¹ Imperative 2nd pers. sing. of oir, 'hear him!'

à la ville parce qu'on me mettroit en prison, car je n'ai pas de quoi le payer. Pour tout bien au monde, je ne possède que ce que j'ai sur le corps. J'avois une pauvre vieille mère: elle n'avoit qu'un matelas, et on le lui a arraché de dessous elle, et maintenant elle est couchée sur la paille nue. J'ai plus de chagrin pour elle que pour moi, car le bien va et vient: si aujourd'hui j'ai perdu, je gagnerai une autre fois; je payerai mon bœuf quand je pourrai et pour ce je ne pleurerai mie. Tandis que vous pleurez pour un sale chien! Bien sot qui vous plaindra.

n'os aler a le vile, c'on me metroit en prison, que je ne l'ai de quoi saure. De tot l'avoir du monde n'ai je plus vaillant que vos veés sor le cors de mi. Une lasse mére avoie, si n'avoit plus vaillant que une keutisele, si li a en sacie de desous le dos, si gist a pur l'estrain. Si m'en poise assés plus que de mi: car avoirs va et vient; se j'ai or perdu, je gaaignerai une autre fois, si sorrai mon buef quand je porrai, ne ja por çou n'en plorerai. Et vos plorastes por un cien de longaigne. Mal dehait ait qui jamais vos prisera!

Of the Meeting of the Lovers in the Forest.

Aucassin gives the poor wretch money to buy another ox, and pursues his way till he comes upon Nicolette's bower. At the sight thereof he dismounts so hurriedly that he falls heavily on a stone and puts his shoulder out. He drags himself as best he

¹ The incident above quoted has no organic connexion with the story. It is here inserted by the present editor because of the sympathy it shows with the wretchedness of the poor, and the 'touch of nature' in the affection of the half-savage boor for his 'weary mother'. It is perhaps a unique instance of such humanity in the courtly romance, though one could match it from the fabliaux.

can into the bower, where Nicolette joins him, and with the help of God, who loves those who love each other, she puts his shoulder back into its place, and applies flowers and fresh herbs and green leaves, and he is straightway whole again.

Of the further Adventures of Aucassin and Nicolette, and of the happy Ending of all their Trials.

Thereafter Aucassin takes his love before him on the saddle, and they ride along, by hill and dale, by town and hamlet, till they come to the sea. There they are surprised by a troop of Saracens, who take and bind them hand and foot, and fling them into separate ships. The ships are parted in a storm. After divers adventures Aucassin puts into shore again at Beaucaire, and the people running up to plunder the vessels are surprised to find their young lord. His father and mother are dead. He is led joyfully to the castle, and holds his lands in peace.

Meanwhile Nicolette, too, has her adventures. The ship casts anchor beneath the walls of Carthage, and Nicolette remembers the castle as the place where her childhood was spent. She is recognized as the daughter of the King of Carthage, and treated with great honour, but when it is sought to marry her to a powerful king of the infidels she makes her escape. She stains her face, takes a viol, and, donning the costume of a jongleur,

finds her way back to Beaucaire.

There she comes upon Aucassin, seated with his barons at the gateway of a tower. Aucassin is sadly pondering his ill-fated love. Nicolette, in her disguise, draws near to the group, and sings to them the story of the loves of Aucassin and Nicolette. Aucassin entreats her to give him, if she can, further news of this Nicolette. 'She is the daughter of the king of Carthage,' answers the jongleur, 'who is fain to give her for husband one of the most powerful of the kings of Spain. But she had rather be hanged or burned alive than take any husband, be he never so rich.' 'Ha, fair sweet friend,' replies Aucassin, 'if you would go back to that country and bid her come and speak with me, I would give you of my wealth all that it should please you to ask or take. And you shall know that, for the love of her, I have not been

willing to take any wife, how lofty soever her birth, but I wait for her, and will never have any other to wife. And if I had known where to find her, I should not have failed to go in search of her.' The jongleur promises to bring Nicolette to him within a few days. And she goes to the house of her foster-mother, where she rubs her face with a certain herb which makes her as fair as ever she had been. And she clothes herself in rich silken garments, and seats herself upon a cloth of silk, and the foster-mother brings Aucassin to her, and the lovers, after all their trials, are at length happily united.

Of the Wedding of Aucassin and Nicolette.

Mais quand le jour vint à se faire,
Bien et dûment il l'épousa
Et la fit dame de Beaucaire.

— Donc ils menèrent de longs jours
Filés d'azur, d'or et de soie.
Si l'amant, avec ses amours,
En ce monde eut sa part de joie,
Son amante eut la sienne aussi.
Dieu vous en donne autant! Ainsi
Finit le conte.

La nuit le laissent ensi,
Tresqu'au demain par matin,
Que l'espousa Aucassins;
Dame de Biaucaire en fist,
Puis vesquirent il mains dis
Et menérent lor delis.
Or a sa joie Aucassins
Et Nicholete autresi.
No cantefable prent fin:
N'en sai plus dire.

CHAPTER III

TROUVÈRE LYRIC. TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

AFTER Epic, Lyric—that would seem to be almost Earliest a law of nature. It is however true of French only French if the term 'lyric' be taken in the derived sense in which it connotes the expression of personal emotion. In the strictly etymological sense the popular ballads, which, as we have seen, preceded the chansons de geste, were lyrics, inasmuch as they were intended to be sung. The earliest French lyrics which we possess, unless we extend this title to the Cantilène de sainte Eulalie (tenth century), belong to the twelfth century. And even they are scarcely yet lyrics in the later sense of the word. The manners, the personages, the style are those of the chansons de geste. Like them they are strictly objective. They are brief narratives, epics in miniature. Those which survive fall into two chief classes—chansons d'histoire and pastourelles.

The chansons d'histoire, i.e. narrative songs, were Chansons also known as chansons de toile, whether because d'histoire. they were accustomed to be sung in order to beguile the tedium of sewing and spinning, or because the heroine is generally shown to us, in the beginning of the song, busied over some such feminine task.1 For there is always a heroine, a belle Isabelle, or

¹ Cf. the old Scotch ballad of 'Young Aikin', which begins: Lady Margaret sits in her bower door, Sewing at her silken seam.

a belle Beatrix, a belle Yolande or a belle Idoine, a belle Argentine or a belle Erembors, and it is upon her fortunes in some love-affair, happy or unhappy, that the romance turns. The romance of La belle Doette here given is one of the most charming. It reminds us of the episode of la belle Aude in the Song of Roland (see p. 35), which would only need to be cast into the conventional form to take its place amongst these chansons de toile.

Pastou-

The pastourelle, like the chansons de toile, assumes a conventional form. A gay cavalier is riding through a meadow or by a wood, and chances upon some fair shepherdess, to whom he incontinently begins to make love. Sometimes she turns a willing ear to his blandishments, leaving in the lurch some rustic lover: Shakespeare travesties the situation in Touchstone's conquest of Audrey in As You Like It. Sometimes the damsel remains true to her shepherd swain, and the discomfited lover rides off pursued by the hootings and gibes of their mates. The pastourelle by Thibaut de Navarre quoted on p. 64 is a good example of the type.

literatures of the North and South of France, the langue d'oïl and the langue d'oc¹, were brought into closer touch through the agency of royal marriages and of the crusades. Under the influence of the more personal lyrics of the troubadours the songs of the trouvères also became more subjective in character, and the period of courtly poetry (poésie courtoise) was inaugurated, which had its heyday in the thirteenth century. The spirit which animates the courtly lyrics is that which we have already met in the contemporary courtly epic, i.e. the Arthurian

In the latter half of the twelfth century the

Influence of the Troubadours. Courtly Lyric.

romances.

Its favourite topic is love. But only

too seldom do we find in it the artless expression of

So called from the words for 'yes' in the two dialects respectively, which arrested attention by their frequent recurrence in speech.

natural emotion, as for example in the love-songs of a Burns. The love of which it treats is largely conventional. It is hard to say whether the poet is really in love, or only playing a game. The game was played according to set rules. The lover must strive by valour, by generosity, by respect for all women, to become a pattern of knightly virtues, and thereby merit the love of his lady, whom he humbly worships at a distance. The ideal is sufficiently lofty, and it is all the odder to find that the object of this chivalrous devotion is not some fair maiden whom the wooer hopes to win for his own, but is regularly some married woman. It is this conception of love which Cervantes satirizes in Don Quixote, where it will be remembered the moonstruck knight of La Mancha feels it incumbent on him at the outset of his career of chivalry to single out an object for his adoration, whom he idealizes as the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso. Dante spiritualizes the same conception in his mystical love for Beatrice.

The poets of this period adopt rhyme in the place Variety of of assonance, and show no mean skill in the elegance metrical and variety of their metrical forms. It is not forms. possible here even to enumerate and define, still less to illustrate, all the different kinds of poems, lai, virelai, descort, jeu-parti, salut d'amour, rotrouenge, ballette, serventois, motet, &c., in which the ingenuity of the trouvères loved to exercise itself. For a particular reason an exception may be made for the Dawnaube or dawn-song, of which the subject is the song. parting of two lovers at break of day. 'Nav, sweet, it is not day; the lark doth lie, says the refrain of one of these. Poetry, like the dandelionflower, scatters its winged seeds far and wide: it was doubtless a seed of this flower which took root in Shakespeare's heart, and blossomed into the

parting of Romeo and Juliet.

LA BELLE DOETTE

ROMANCE ANONYME

La belle Doette est assise à la fenêtre. Elle lit en un livre, mais elle a le cœur ailleurs. Il lui ressouvient de son ami Doon, qui est allé au tournoi en autres terres. Et maintenant j'en ai deuil.

Un écuyer est descendu devant les degrés de la salle, il a défait son bagage. La belle Doette descend les degrés. Elle ne s'attend pas à ouïr mauvaise nouvelle. Et maintenant j'en ai deuil.

La belle Doette lui demanda aussitôt: 'Où est mon seigneur, que je n'ai vu depuis si longtemps?' Lui eut telle douleur qu'il pleura de pitié. La belle Doette se pâma aussitôt. Et maintenant j'en ai deuil.

Bele Doette ¹ as fenestres se siet, Lit en un livre, mais au cuer ne l'en tient; De son ami Doon li ressovient, Qu'en autres terres est alez tornoier, E or en ai dol

Uns escuiers as degrés de la sale Est dessenduz, s'est destrosse ² sa male. Bele Doette les degrez en avale, Ne cuide ³ pas oir novele male, E or en ai dol.

Bele Doette tantost li demanda:
'Ou est mes sires que ne vi tel pieça?'4
Cil ot tel duel que de pitié plora.
Bele Doette maintenant se pasma.

E or en ai dol.

¹ Doette is the feminine diminutive of Do, nominative masculine, of which Doon is the oblique case.

² Lit. sa malle s'est défaite.

³ croit.

⁴ i.e. pièce a, il y a pièce, il y a longtemps.

La belle Doette s'est dressée sur ses pieds. Elle voit l'écuyer, elle s'est dirigée vers lui. Elle est dolente et courroucée en son cœur, pour son seigneur qu'elle ne voit point. Et maintenant j'en ai deuil.

La belle Doette se prit à lui demander : 'Où est mon seigneur, que je dois tant aimer ?' 'Au nom de Dieu, madame, je ne veux plus vous le cacher. Mon seigneur est mort, il fut tué au combat.' Et maintenant j'en ai deuil.

La belle Doette s'est mise à se lamenter. 'Par quel malheur vous y fûtes, comte Doon, franc et noble! Pour l'amour de vous je revêtirai la haire, et sur mon corps il n'y aura plus de pelisse de vair. Et maintenant

Bele Doette s'est en estant drecie, Voit l'escuier, vers lui s'est adrecie; En son cuer est dolante et correcie Por son seignor dont ele ne voit mie. E or en ai dol.

Bele Doette li prist a demander:

- 'Ou est mes sires cui je doi tant amer?'
- '-En non Deu, dame, nel 1 vos quier 2 mais celer:
- 'Morz est mes sires, ocis 3 fu au joster.'
 E or en ai dol.

Bele Doette a pris son duel a faire.

- 'Tant mar i fustes, cuens Do, frans, debonaire.4
- 'Por vostre amor vestirai je la haire,
- 'Ne sor mon cors n'avra pelice vaire.

¹ ne le. ² veux (Lat. quaero). ³ tué (Lat. occisus). ⁴ i.e. de bonne aire, 'of good lineage,' or perhaps de bon air, 'of good appearance.'

j'en ai deuil. Pour vous je deviendrai nonne en l'église Saint-Paul.

'Pour vous je bâtirai une abbaye telle que, quand viendra le jour de la fête solennelle, s'il y vient quelqu'un qui ait manqué à l'amour juré, il ne saura l'entrée du moutier. Et maintenant j'en ai deuil. Pour vous je deviendrai nonne en l'église Saint-Paul.'

La belle Doette s'est mise à bâtir son abbaye, qui est bien grande, et qui le sera encore davantage. Elle voudra y attirer tous ceux et toutes celles qui par amour savent endurer peine et malheur. Et maintenant j'en ai deuil. Pour vous je deviendrai nonne en l'église Saint-Paul.¹

'E or en ai dol.

- 'Por vos devenrai nonne en l'eglise saint Pol.
- 'Por vos ferai une abbaie tele
- 'Quant iert 2 li jors que la feste iert nomeie,
- 'Se nus 3 i vient qui ait s'amor fauseie,
- 'Ja del mostier ne savera l'entreie.

'E or en ai dol:

'Por vos devenrai nonne a l'eglise saint Pol.'

Bele Doette prist s'abaile a faire, Qui mout est grande et ades sera maire: Toz cels et celes vodra dedanz atraire Qui por amor sevent peine et mal traire.

E or en ai dol:

Por vos devenrai nonne a l'eglise saint Pol.

¹ The O.Fr. text of La belle Doette is that of Bartseh in Französische Romanzen und Pastourellen, and is here reproduced by the kind permission of the Verlagsbuchhandlung F. C. W. Vogel, Leipzig.

² sera (Lat. erit).

³ quelqu'un (Lat. nullus).

QUESNES OF CONON DE BÉTHUNE (born about the middle of the twelfth century, died about 1224) came of an illustrious family, and was one of the ancestors of Sully, the famous Minister of Henri IV. He was twice in the Holy Land, and distinguished himself at the storming of Constantinople (see p. 114).

CHANSON DE CROISADE

Hélas, amour, quel dur départ il me faudra faire pour quitter la meilleure femme qui jamais fût aimée ou servie! Dieu me ramène à elle par sa douceur, aussi vraiment que je m'en sépare avec douleur. Hélas. qu'ai-je dit ? Non, je ne m'en sépare point. Si mon corps va servir Notre-Seigneur, mon cœur reste entièrement en sa puissance.

Pour lui je m'en vais soupirant en Syrie, car je ne dois pas manquer à mon Créateur. Qui lui manquera dans ce besoin d'aide, sachez bien qu'il lui manguera en

Ahi, amours, com dure departie Me convendra faire de la meillour Ki onques 1 fust amee ne servie! Dex 2 me ramaint 3 a li par sa douçour Si voirement que m'en part a dolour. Las, qu'ai-je dit ? ja ne m'en part je mie : Se li cors vait servir Nostre Seignour, Li cuers remaint 4 del tout en sa baillie.

Pour li m'en vois souspirant en Surie, Car je ne doi faillir mon Creatour. Qui li faudra a cest besoing d'aie Sachiez que il li faudra a greignour.5

5 plus grand (Lat. grandiorem).

jamais (Lat. unquam).
 Dieu, see App. I.
 3rd sing. pres. subj. of ramener, see App. II, B. 2. ² Dieu, see App. I, 1.

^{4 3}rd sing. pres. ind. of remanoir, see App. II, B. 2.

plus grand besoin. Et qu'ils sachent bien, les grands et les moins grands, qu'on doit faire chevalerie là où l'on conquiert paradis et honneur, et profit et gloire et l'amour de sa mie.

Dieu est assis en son saint héritage: maintenant il y paraîtra si ceux-là le secourront qu'il jeta hors de la sombre prison, quand il mourut sur la croix qu'ont les Turcs. Sachez que grandement honnis sont ceux qui n'iront, à moins qu'ils ne soient pauvres ou vieux ou malades, et ceux qui sont sains et jeunes et riches ne peuvent pas demeurer sans honte.

Qui ne veut avoir ici vie ennuyeuse, qu'il s'en aille mourir pour Dieu, heureux et joyeux. Qu'elle est douce et savoureuse, cette mort par laquelle on conquiert le

Et sachent bien li grant et li menour ¹ Que la doit on faire chevalerie U on conquiert paradis et honour, Et pris ² et los ³ et l'amour de s'amie.

Dex est assis en son saint hiretage:
Or i parra se cil le secorront
Qui il jeta de la prison ombrage,
Quant il fu mors en la crois que Turc ont.
Sachiez, cil sont trop honi qui n'iront,
S'il n'ont poverte ou vieillece ou malage,
Et cil qui sain et joene et riche sont
Ne pueent pas demourer sans hontage.

Qui ci ne veut avoir vie anuieuse Si voist⁴ pour Dieu morir liés⁵ et joieus. Que cele mors est douce et savereuse, Dont on conquiert le regne precieus!

moins grands (Lat. minorem).
 louange, gloire (Lat. laus).
 qu'il aille (subj. of aller).
 heureux (Lat. laetus).

royaume précieux! Que dis-je? De mort il ne mourra pas un seul, ils naîtront plutôt en une vie glorieuse. Je ne sais aucun qui n'en fût amoureux, si bonne et si délicieuse serait la voie.

Dieu! nous avons été si preux par divertissement. Maintenant apparaîtra qui sera vraiment preux. Nous allons venger la honte douloureuse dont chacun doit être courroucé et honteux. Car en nos jours est perdu le saint lieu où Dieu souffrit pour nous une mort glorieuse. Si maintenant nous y laissons nos ennemis mortels, notre vie sera à jamais honteuse.

Ne ja de mort n'en i morra uns seus, Ains naisteront en vie glorieuse. Je n'i sai plus qui ne fust amoreus, Trop fust la voie et bone et deliteuse.

Dex, tant avom esté preu par huiseuse: Or i parra qui a certes iert ¹ preus, S'irom vengier la honte dolereuse, Dont chascuns doit estre iriez et honteus, Qu'a nostre tans ² est perduz li sains leus U Deus soufri pour nous mort glorieuse. S'or i laissom nos anemis morteus, A tous jours mais iert no vie honteuse.

¹ sera (Lat. erit).

² temps, see App. I, 7.

THIBAUT, COMTE DE CHAMPAGNE ET DE BRIE, ROI DE NAVARRE, born 1201, died in Champagne, 1253, on his return from the Sixth Crusade. During the minority of Louis IX he joined the feudal coalition against royalty, but deserted it at the instance of Blanche de Castille. He was a disciple of the southern troubadours, who thronged the court of his mother, Blanche de Navarre, and thus his poetry illustrates the change in the spirit of the poetry of the north under the influence of the bards who used the southern dialect (see p. 56).

PASTOURELLE

L'autre jour, dans la matinée, entre un bois et un verger, j'ai trouvé une bergère qui chantait pour se divertir. Et elle disait premièrement : 'Ici me tient le mal d'amour.' Aussitôt je me dirige du côté où je l'entends parler, et je lui dis sans délai : 'La belle, Dieu vous donne bon jour!'

Elle me rendit mon salut sans délai et sans retard. Elle était bien fraîche et bien vermeille, aussi m'a-t-il

> L'autrier par la matinee, Entre un bois et un vergier, Une pastore ai trovee ¹ Chantant por soi envoisier; Et disoit en son premier: 'Ci me tient li maus d'amor.' Tantost cele part m'en tor Que je l'oi desraisnier, Si ² li dis sans delaier: 'Bele, Diex vos doint bon jor!' Mon salu sanz demoree Me rendi ¹ et sanz targier; Molt ert ⁴ fresche et coloree,

¹ See App. III, 1. ² See App. IV, 2. ³ See App. I, 1. ⁴ était (Lat. erat).

plu de l'aborder : 'La belle, je requiers votre amour et de moi vous aurez riches atours.' Elle répond : 'Les chevaliers sont par trop trompeurs. J'aime mieux Perrin, mon berger, qu'un riche homme dupeur,'

'La belle, ne dites point ceci. Les chevaliers sont trop vaillants. Qui donc sait avoir une amie, ou lui faire plaisir, sinon les chevaliers et de telles gens? Mais l'amour d'un berger ne vaut certes pas un bouton. Quittez-le sur-le-champ et m'aimez. Je vous promets que de moi vous aurez riche don.'

'Sire, par sainte Marie, vous avez beau parler.

Si 1 mi plot a acointier: 'Bele, vostre amor vos quier,2 S'1avroiz de moi riche ator.' Elle respont: 'Tricheor 'Sont mes trop cil chevalier. 'Mielz aim 3 Perrin mon bergier 'Que riche home gengleor.' 'Bele, ce ne dites mie:

'Chevalier sont trop vaillant.

'Qui set dont avoir amie

'Ne servir a son talent

'Fors chevalier et tel gent?

'Mès l'amors d'un bergeron

'Certes ne vaut un boton.

'Partez vos en a itant

'Et m'amez: je vos creant 4

'De moi avroiz riche don.'

'Sire, par sainte Marie!

'Vos en parlez por neant.

¹ See App. IV, 2. ³ See App. II, B, 1.

² demande (Lat. quaero). 4 promets.

¹²²⁸

chevaliers à la solde ont trompé mainte dame. Ils sont par trop faux et traîtres. Ils valent pis que Ganelon¹. Je m'en retourne en ma maison, car Perrin, qui m'y attend, m'aime d'un cœur loyal. Baissez votre caquet.'

Je compris bien que la bergère voulait m'échapper. Je lui fis bien longue prière, mais je n'y pus rien gagner. Alors je me suis mis à l'accoler, et elle de jeter un haut cri : 'Perrinet, trahison! trahison!' On commence à crier dans le bois. Je la quitte sans tarder. Sur mon cheval je partis.

J'entendi bien la bergiere Qu'ele me velt eschaper; Molt li fis longue priere, Mes n'i poi riens conquester. Lors la pris a acoler, Et ele gete un haut cri: 'Perrinet, trahi! trahi!' Du bois prenent a huper: Je la lais sanz demorer, Seur mon cheval m'en parti.

^{&#}x27;Mainte dame avront trichie

^{&#}x27;Cil chevalier soudoiant.

^{&#}x27;Trop sont faus et mal pensant:

^{&#}x27;Pis valent de Guenelon.1

^{&#}x27;Je m'en revois en meson,

^{&#}x27;Car Perrins, qui mi atent,
'M'aime de cuer loiaument.

Maime de cuer loiaument.

^{&#}x27;Abais iez vostre raison.'

¹ The traitor in the Chanson de Roland.

Quand elle me vit m'en aller, elle dit par raillerie : 'Ces chevaliers sont trop hardis.' 1

Quant elle m'en vit aler, Elle dist par ramposner: 'Chevalier sont trop hardi.'

THE MINSTREL ASKS FOR HIS WAGES

By COLIN MUSET

Sire comte, j'ai viellé devant vous, en votre hôtel, et cependant vous ne m'avez rien donné, ni acquitté mes gages. C'est vilenie. Par la foi que je dois à sainte Marie, jamais je ne vous suivrai plus. Mon aumônière est mal garnie, et ma malle mal farcie.

Sire comte, commandez-moi donc selon votre volonté.

Sire quens, j'ai vielé
Devant vos en vostre osté;
Si ² ne m'avez riens doné,
Ne mes gages acquité,
C'est vilenie.
Foi que doi sainte Marie,
Ainc ne vos sievrai je mie;
M'aumosniere est mal garnie,
Et ma malle mal farcie.

Sire quens, quar ³ commandez De moi vostre volenté.

¹ The text of the above Pastourelle is that of Bartsch in Französische Romanzen und Pastourellen, and is here reproduced by the kind permission of the Verlagsbuchhandlung F. C. W. Vogel, Leipzig.

² See App. IV, 2.

³ Or car (Lat. quare). See App. IV, 4.

Sire, si vous prenez la chose en gré, faites-moi donc un beau don par courtoisie. J'ai envie, n'en doutez pas, de retourner dans ma famille. Quand j'y vais la bourse dégarnie, ma femme ne me rit nullement.

Mais elle me dit: 'Monsieur le Morfondu, en quelle terre avez-vous été, que vous n'avez rien gagné à travers la ville? Voyez comme votre malle plie. Elle est toute farcie de vent. Honni soit qui a envie d'être en votre compagnie!'

Quand je viens à mon logis, et que ma femme a regardé derrière moi le sac enflé, et moi qui suis bien

> Sire, s'il vos vient à gré, Un beau don car me donez Par cortoisie Talent ai, n'en doutez mie. De r'aler 1 à ma mesnie : 2 Quant vois bourse desgarnie. Ma feme ne me rit mie. Ains me dist: sire Engelé. En quel terre avez esté, Qui n'avez rien conquesté Aval la ville? Vez com vostre malle plie. Elle est bien de vent farcie. Honiz 3 soit qui a envie D'estre en vostre compaignie! Quant je vien à mon osté, Et ma feme a regardé Derrier moi le sac enflé.

¹ Compound of re- and aller, to go back, to go again.

² Survives in archaic Eng. meiny.
³ 'Shamed,' familiar to the English in 'Honi soit qui mal y pense'.

paré de robe grise, sachez qu'elle a tôt jeté bas la quenouille, sans feintise. Elle me rit franchement, elle me lie ses deux bras au cou. Ma femme va défaire mon bagage sans tarder.

Mon garçon va abreuver mon cheval et le soigner. Ma servante va tuer deux chapons, pour les accommoder à la sauce à l'ail. Ma fille m'apporte un peigne en sa main par courtoisie. Alors je suis seigneur chez moi, en très grande joie et sans fâcherie, plus qu'on ne saurait dire.¹

Et ge ² qui sui bien paré
De robe grise,
Sachiés qu'ele a tost jus mis
La quenoille sans faintise;
Elle me rist par franchise,
Ses deux bras au col me lie.
Ma feme va detrousser
Ma malle sans demorer.

Mes garçons va abriver
Mon cheval et conreer; ³
Ma pucele va tuer
Deus chapons, por deporter
A sause aillie;

Ma fille m'aporte un pigne En sa main par cortoisie; Lors sui de mon ostel sire A mult grant joie, sans ire⁴ Plus que nus ne porroit dire.

¹ The above text is reproduced from Gidel's *Histoire de la littérature française*, by kind permission of Messrs. Alphonse Lemerre.

² i.e. je. See App. I, 7.

³ The root of the second part of the word is identical with that of the Scotch 'redd' in 'to redd up'. Cf. Ital. corredare. 4 From Lat. ira.

CHAPTER IV

THE FABLIAUX

THE Fabliaux ¹ are short stories in verse, usually of humorous or satiric character. The reader will form a tolerably accurate conception of their general character if he imagines one of the Canterbury Tales, in particular one of such as are in lighter vein, stripped of much of its description and characterization, and more rapidly related in the essentials of its plot, so as to bring it within the compass of two or three hundred lines.

Date of the Fabliaux. Fabliaux doubtless already existed as a part of the répertoire of the jongleurs, side by side with the earlier epics, but the earliest extant manuscripts date from the thirteenth century. After flourishing vigorously during some two centuries, they completely disappear as a literary form in the fifteenth century, the material of which they were composed being then caught up into the newly evolving farce.

The Fabliaux and the bourgeoisie.

Their rise into the horizon of literature thus coincides with the birth of the new bourgeoisie; or middle-class of industry and commerce, and it was no doubt to the palate of this new public that they made their chief appeal. The bourgeois society was too little sheltered from the more sordid sides of human existence, and had too little leisure from the urgency of the daily task, to permit it to develop the refined taste which in the court and the castle delighted in the higher flights of poetry. And so

¹ 'Little fables or stories.' The more correct form would be fableaux. Fabliaux is a Picard form.

in the fabliaux we have the reverse of that medal of which the courtly literature of chivalry presents us with the obverse; and indeed the frankly materialistic picture of mediaeval life which the fabliaux offer us is doubtless as much overdrawn as is the delicately idealistic picture which meets us

in the romances and lyrics of chivalry.

Many, nay most of the fabliaux are excluded by women their nature from the scope of this work. One of in the Fatheir most characteristic features is that marked bliaux. hostility to women which reappears so often in the literature of the Middle Ages, and which here at any rate is largely a reaction against the all but deification of the sex in the courtly literature. The fabliaux too were in all likelihood generally recited to audiences of men, and 'les absents ont toujours

The fabliau here given, La Housse partie (i.e. the 'The horsecloth cut in two), tells how a father was cor-Horserected of ingratitude to his own father by an artless cloth cut in two. remark of his little son, which led him to anticipate a like treatment when he too should have become a helpless old man. It is amongst the most charming of its class. But it is the humorous, not the sentimental or the edifying, which predominates in the fabliaux. Their main object is to set the table in a roar.

Sometimes the fun, if artless to the point of 'The childishness, is innocent enough, as in the fabliau Priest and the Blackberries'. A worthy berries,' priest was jogging along the highroad on his pad, when his eye fell on a luscious cluster of blackberries which hung high above his head. The day was hot and the rider was thirsty. Standing on tiptoe on his saddle he stretched out his hand to gather the prize. Thereupon the thought flashed through his head: 'What a plight should I now be in if any one were to shout "Come up!"

Unfortunately the good father was given to thinking aloud, and the nag, pricking up its ears at the familiar word, jogged on, leaving its rider sprawling among the brambles. The moral—the fabliau always affects to have a moral, though it is not always so apt-is that it is not wise to say all one thinks

' Foolish

Another relates how a hardworking salt-huckster generosity.'cured his wife of her 'foolish generosity'. The honest man was newly married, and his young wife, to curry favour with her gossips, gave away with lavish hand the salt which he brought daily from the seaside, four leagues away. 'We are out of salt, husband,' says the woman. 'You must fetch more. It was little enough you brought last time.' 'Why not come with me, wife,' says the good man, 'and we can bring a double load. It is nothing but sport. You will see how green the fields are, and hear the lark sing, and you will be all the prettier for it.' So the couple set out at break of day, and the wife trips along, singing merrily. But on the homeward journey, as her basket grows heavier and heavier, the poor woman changes her tune. At length the honest fellow relieves her of a part of her burden, and so they reach home. Next day the gossips come crowding in as usual, 'just to beg a little salt.' 'Salt, quotha,' she bursts out upon them. 'Marry, do you think we get the salt for nothing? Nay, by my troth, but we have to carry it all the way from the sea, four good leagues away. No money, no salt!' And thenceforth she sells the salt so well that before two summers have passed her husband has two horses and a cart to fetch it with.

One of the most amusing of the fabliaux, Le Vilain Mire, 'The Boor turned Leech', had the honour of furnishing the subject of Molière's comedy, Le Médecin malgré lui. A well-to-do boor has married

the daughter of a knight. The ill-yoked pair 'The Boor naturally quarrel, and the husband asserts his turned authority with the cudgel. Burning for vengeance, the wife falls in with messengers in quest of a physician to heal the king's daughter, in whose gullet a fish-bone has lodged. She tells them that her husband is a marvellous leech, but being eccentric, will not admit it or show his skill save under the persuasion of a good beating. So they greet the astonished peasant as a gifted physician, drub him well till he admits it, and hale him off to Court. Being coaxed with another sound drubbing, he undertakes to cure the princess forthwith. He asks to be left alone with her, and by his droll antics provokes her to a fit of uncontrollable laughter, which causes her to cough up the bone. The king is delighted, has him shaven and shorn, puts a scarlet robe on him, and vows he shall cure all the sick in his kingdom. The gentle persuasion of the cudgel induces him to undertake the cure. He has a great fire kindled, and bids the king and all those who are sound and well to withdraw. Then he announces to the rest that the only cure for them is to burn alive in the fire him who is most sick, and to give the others to drink of his ashes, when they will straightway be whole. 'Come,' he says to one, 'you seem to be in a bad way. We'll burn you for the good of the others.' But the terrified wretch declares that he never was better in his life. He is cured of all his ailments. 'What are you doing here, then?' asks the peasant. 'Away with you!' 'Are you cured?' eagerly asks the king when he appears. 'Yes, sire, thanks be to God!' he answers. 'I am sounder than an apple. You is a marvellous doctor at need.' The sick folk tumble over one another in their eagerness to declare themselves cured, and the king loads the peasant with gifts, and sends him home richer than

ever was peasant before. And he never again walked at the plough-tail, neither beat his wife any more—for he knew now what sore bones were—but loved and cherished her for the rest of his days.

'The Peasant who won Paradise by Argument.'

The fabliau of the 'Peasant who won Paradise by Argument' contains an excellent lesson, which in truth is spoilt in the application. It is an example of that naïve familiarity in the handling of sacred things which it would be unjust to identify too hastily with irreverence. In the religious conceptions of the Middle Ages, Heaven was less remote from the daily life of this world than is the case with the less material religion of to-day, and the intercourse of man with saints and angels was on a more familiar footing, so that the fabliau in question might easily be matched from amongst contemporary sermons. A peasant dies, and his soul, having quitted the body, finds itself-of so little account had it been when in the clay-awaited neither by angel nor by devil. Looking about it, it spies St. Michael escorting a soul to Paradise, and, following the saint, slips into Heaven whilst St. Peter is busy receiving the more fortunate soul. St. Peter indignantly calls upon the unbidden guest to withdraw. No one enters there without licence. and moreover they do not receive villains. 'Can there be a greater villain than you, fair St. Peter,' retorts the peasant, 'you who denied Our Lord thrice?' Thus reproached with his fault, St. Peter falls back abashed, and St. Thomas takes upon himself to put out the intruder. 'Villein,' he says, 'this place is for us, the saints and martyrs. What have you done, that you should think to remain here? This is the hostelry of the loyal.' 'Thomas. Thomas,' says the villein, 'the hostelry of the loyal! Was it not you who would not believe that Our Lord stood before you until you had felt His wounds?' Now it is Thomas's turn to hang his

head, and St. Paul comes to the rescue. 'Void Paradise, false villein,' he says. 'When have you merited that the door should be opened to you?' 'What, Dan Paul,' retorts the villein, 'was it not you who caused St. Stephen to be stoned? Think you I do not know your life?' The three saints, thus discomfited, carry the question to a higher tribunal, where the villein pleads his cause so well that judgement is given in his favour. The moral is that cunning is better than strength. The story would have lent itself to a much loftier lesson, but it aimed at being an amusing tale, and not a sermon.¹

The question of the origin of the motifs treated sources in the fabliaux has been variously answered. One of the theory traced them to oriental, and particularly Fabliaux Hindoo sources. They were supposed to have entered Europe through the medium of the crusades, or by the channel of the Arabs and the Jews. Many of them were indeed current amongst these peoples; but a more far-reaching research shows them to have been more widely disseminated than earlier inquirers suspected. They turn up, alike in essence, though varied by a thousand accidents of local and moral colouring, amongst peoples civilized and uncivilized in all corners of the globe. The mystery of their genesis and propagation is as complicated as that of the origin and dissemination of human language itself. Some doubtless form part of the inheritance of mankind from its earliest ancestors, and were carried forth from a common home in divers directions by migrating clans. Others, originating in various places at a later date, have been spread abroad by divers agencies as universally and as untraceably as the seeds of

¹ James Russel Lowell, in a poem written for the Burns Centenary in 1859, humorously adapts this *fablian*, describing a vision he professes to have had 'of Burns's soul at the wicket-hole where sits the good Saint Peter'.

vegetable life are disseminated by wind and current and animal hosts. They reappear from time to time in divers forms in various literatures, and still live on up to the present day in an undercurrent of oral tradition independently of literature. people clothes them with its own mental characteristics and adapts them to the circumstances of its daily life. Thus one of the greatest sources of interest of the French fabliaux lies in the faithfulness with which they reflect the modes of life and ways of thought of mediaeval France. And as the matter of the fabliaux gives us on the whole an unvarnished picture of the life from which they sprang (though not without some of that over-accentuation of its grosser features to which realism always tends), so their language, lively, familiar, full of colour, furnishes a more accurate image of the language actually spoken at the time than the epics on the one hand, whose style lends itself to pretentiousness and pedantry, and the lyrics on the other, which tend through over-refinement to preciosity.

The Fabliaux a mirror of mediaeval life.

LA HOUSSE PARTIE

(THE HORSE-CLOTH CUT IN TWO)

BY BERNARD

A rich citizen of Abbeville, being at strife with more powerful folk than himself, settles in Paris with his wife and an only son. There he buys and sells, amassing great wealth, and living happily till the death of his wife. Thereupon the father, anxious to see his son well married, casts about to find him a wife of good birth. He fixes his choice on the daughter of a knight, of high birth and with powerful friends, but who had impoverished himself, and even pledged his lands and woods and houses, in order to gratify his passion for tournaments. But the young lady's friends will only hear of the match on condition that the father of the wooer will settle all his wealth on his son, the prospective

bridegroom. The father does not hesitate. Like King Lear, he strips himself of everything he possesses, remaining himself as 'naked as a peeled willow-wand'. During the first twelve years of the marriage all goes well. A son is born to the new household, who often hears recalled what his grandfather had done in order that his father might marry his mother, and 'takes good care not to forget it'. Meanwhile the worthy merchant is grown old, and becomes burdensome to his children.

Le prud'homme était devenu vieux; car la vieillesse l'avait tant abattu qu'il lui fallait s'appuyer sur un bâton. Son fils serait allé volontiers chercher un linceul pour l'ensevelir. Il lui tardait qu'il fût en terre, car sa vie lui était à charge. La Dame ne pouvait s'empêcher — tellement elle était fière et orgueilleuse et dédaigneuse du prud'homme, qu'elle avait en grande aversion — elle ne pouvait nullement s'empêcher de dire à son seigneur: 'Sire, je vous prie par l'amour que

Li preudon ¹ fu viex ² devenu, Que ³ viellece l'ot abatu Qu'au baston l'estuet soustenir. La toile à lui ensevelir Alast volentiers ses filz ⁴ querre: Tart li estoit qu'il fust en terre, Que ³ sa vie li anuioit. La Dame lessier ne pooit, Qui fière estoit et orguilleuse, Du preudome ¹ estoit desdaigneuse, Qui moult li estoit contre cuer, Or ne puet lessier à nul fuer Qu'ele ne déist son Seignor: 'Sire, je vous pri par amor,

See App. II, A. 3. Preudon is nom., preudome obl.
 See App. I, 1.
 'for,' see App. IV, 3.
 Nom. sing., son fils. See App. II, A. 1.

vous me portez, donnez congé à votre père, car, par la foi que je dois à l'âme de ma mère, je ne mangerai plus avec les dents tant que je le saurai céans. Je veux plutôt que vous lui donniez congé.'

'Madame,' fait-il, 'ainsi ferai-je.'

The ingrate, who is under his wife's thumb, accordingly bids his father provide himself with a lodging elsewhere. For twelve years he has had his meat in that house, now he must fend for himself.

Le père l'entend, il pleure amèrement, il maudit souvent le jour et l'heure pour avoir tant vécu au monde:

'Ah! beau doux fils, que me dis-tu? Pour l'amour de Dieu, fais-moi au moins assez d'honneur pour me laisser ici à ta porte. Je me coucherai en peu de place: je ne te demande même ni feu, ni courte-pointe, ni

Li pères l'ot; durement pleure; Sovent maudit le jor et l'eure Qu'il a tant au siècle vescu:

^{&#}x27;Donez congié à vostre père,

^{&#}x27; Que, foi que doi l'ame ma mère,1

^{&#}x27;Je ne mengerai mès des denz

^{&#}x27;Tant com je le saurai céenz,

^{&#}x27;Ainz vueil que li donez congié.

^{&#}x27;- Dame,' fet-il, 'si ferai-gié.'

^{&#}x27;Ha! biaus douz fils, que me dis-tu?

^{&#}x27;Por Dieu, itant d'onor me porte

^{&#}x27;Que ci me lesses à ta porte.

^{&#}x27;Je me girrai en poi de leu;

^{&#}x27;Je ne te quier nis 2 point de feu,

¹ See App. III, 3. ² pas même (Lat. ne ipsum).

tapis; mais là-dehors, sous cet appentis, fais-moi donner un peu de paille.'

The old man recks little if he is driven forth of the house, he pleads, but let his son not grudge him the bit of food. He will better atone for his sins by showing him kindness than if he were to wear a hair-shirt. But the son hardens his heart. There are ten thousand who make a shift to live in the town, it would be strange if his father should starve. And some acquaintance will give him a shelter. 'What,' says the father, 'when my own son refuses me one?' And, broken-hearted, the old man totters weeping from the house.

'Fils,' fit-il, 'je te recommande à Dieu. Puisque tu veux que je m'en aille, pour l'amour de Dieu donne-moi un lambeau d'un morceau de ta serpillière, ce n'est pas chose bien chère — car je ne puis souffrir le froid.' Et lui, qui recule à donner, lui dit: 'Père, je n'en ai aucune. Donner n'est pas de saison à l'heure qu'il est.

Et cil, qui de doner recule, Li dist: 'Pères, je n'en ai nule.

^{&#}x27;Ne coute-pointe, ne tapis;

^{&#}x27;Mès la fors souz cel apentis

^{&#}x27;Me fai baillier un pou d'estrain.'

^{&#}x27;Filz,' fet-il, 'à Dieu te commant.1

^{&#}x27;Puisque tu veus que je m'en aille,

^{&#}x27;Por Dieu me done une retaille

^{&#}x27;D'un tronçon de ta sarpeillière,

^{&#}x27;Ce n'est mie chose moult 2 chière

^{&#}x27;Que je ne puis le froit soufrir . . .'

^{&#}x27;Li doners 3 n'est or pas à point :

^{&#}x27;A ceste foiz n'en aurez point.

¹ See App. II, B. 1. ² très (Lat. multum).

³ doner, as the nom. s and the art. show, is here a substantive, 'giving.'

Vous n'en aurez pas à cette occasion, à moins de la prendre ou de la voler.'

'Beau doux fils, tout le cœur me tremble, et je redoute tant le froid. Donne-moi une couverture, dont tu couvres ton cheval, pour que le froid ne me fasse pas mal.'

Eager to be rid of him, he calls his own son, and bids him give his grandfather the rug (la housse) from off his black horse—the best one. The child leads the old man to the stable, takes the rug, folds it in two, cuts it down the middle, and gives him the one half. The old man protests:

'Beau fils,' fait-il, 'que ferai-je? Pourquoi me l'as-tu coupée? Ton père me l'avait donnée. Tu as fait grande cruauté, car ton père avait commandé que je l'eusse tout entière. Je m'en irai de nouveau à lui.'

'Allez où vous voudrez,' fait-il, 'car jamais de moi vous n'en aurez plus.'

^{&#}x27;Se on ne me le tolt ou emble.

^{&#}x27;- Biaus douz filz, toz li cuers me tramble,

^{&#}x27;Et je redout 1 tant la froidure;

^{&#}x27;Done moi une couverture

^{&#}x27;De qoi tu cuevres ton cheval,

^{&#}x27;Que li frois ne me face mal.'

^{&#}x27;Biaus filz,' fet-il, 'que ferai-gié?

^{&#}x27;Por qoi le m'as-tu recopée ?

^{&#}x27;Ton père le m'avoit donée.

^{&#}x27;Or as-tu fet grant 2 cruauté.

^{&#}x27;Que ton père avoit commandé

^{&#}x27;Que je l'eusse toute entière;

^{&#}x27;Je m'en irai à lui arrière.

^{&#}x27;- Alez,' fet-il, 'où vous voudrez,

^{&#}x27;Que jà 3 par moi plus n'en aurez.'

¹ See App. II, B. 1. ² Here fem. See App. II, A. 4. ³ From Lat. iam.

Le prud'homme sortit de l'écurie: 'Fils,' fait-il, 'il n'y a rien de tout ce que tu commandas et fis qui ne tourne à fable. Que ne châties-tu ton fils, vu qu'il ne te redoute ni ne te craint? Ne vois-tu donc pas qu'il retient la moitié de la couverture?' 'Va, Dieu te donne male aventure!' dit le père. 'Donne-la-lui toute.' 'Je n'en ferai rien,' dit l'enfant, 'assurément. Avec quoi vous contenterai-je? Je vous en garde la moitié, car jamais de moi vous n'en aurez plus. Si je puis avoir le dessus, je vous donnerai en partage juste autant que vous lui aurez donné. Ainsi qu'il vous donna ses biens, moi aussi je veux les avoir; et de moi

Li preudon issi 1 de l'estable: 2

- 'Filz,' fet-il, 'trestout torne à fable
- 'Quanque tu commandas et fis;
- 'Que ne chastoies-tu ton fils
- 'Qu'il ne te doute ne ne crient ?
- 'Ne vois-tu donques qu'il retient
- 'La moitié de la couverture?'
- 'Va, Diex 3 te doinst male aventure!'

Dist li pères; 'baille li toute.'

- 'Non ferai,' dist l'enfes, 'sanz doute:
- 'De qoi seriiez-vous paié?
- 'Je vous en estui la moitié,
- 'Que jà de moi n'en aurez plus.
- 'Se j'en puis venir au desus,
- 'Je vous partirai autressi
- 'Comme vous avez lui parti.
- 'Si comme il vous dona l'avoir,

¹ From Lat. exiit.

² Formerly used of horses, as Eng. stable still is. Etable now means cow-byre.

³ See App. I, 1.

vous n'obtiendrez qu'autant que vous lui donnerez. Si vous le laissez mourir dans la misère, ainsi je ferai de vous, si je vis.'

Le père l'entend, il soupire profondément, il réfléchit, il se considère. Aux paroles que l'enfant a dites, il prend une grande leçon. Il tourna son visage vers son père à lui: 'Père,' fait-il, 'revenez sur vos pas. C'était l'Ennemi, le Péché, qui pense m'avoir pris dans le piège. Mais, s'il plaît à Dieu, cela ne peut être. Maintenant je vous fais seigneur et maître de ma maison à tout jamais. Si ma femme ne veut pas la paix, si elle ne veut pas s'accorder avec vous, je vous ferai bien

Li pères l'ot: parfont souspire:

Il se repensse et se remire.

Aus paroles que l'enfes dist

Li pères grant example prist : Vers son père torna sa chière :

^{&#}x27;Tout aussi le vueil-je avoir,

^{&#}x27;Que jà de moi n'enporterez

^{&#}x27;Fors que tant com vous li donrez.

^{&#}x27;Si le lessiez morir chetif.

^{&#}x27;Si ferai-je vous, se je vif.'

^{&#}x27;Pères,' fet-il, 'tornez arrière;

^{&#}x27;C'estoit anemis et pechié

^{&#}x27;Qui me cuide avoir aguetié;

^{&#}x27;Mès, se Dieu 1 plest, ce ne puet estre.

^{&#}x27;Or vous faz-je seignor et mestre

^{&#}x27;De mon ostel à toz jors mais.

^{&#}x27;Se ma feme ne veut la pais.

^{&#}x27;S'ele ne vous veut consentir.

¹ Dative, see App. III, 3,

servir ailleurs. Je vous ferai bien pourvoir de courtepointe et d'oreiller, et, je vous le jure par saint Martin, jamais je ne boirai de vin, ni ne mangerai un bon morceau, que vous n'en ayez du plus beau. Et vous serez dans une chambre bien close, avec un bon feu dans la cheminée, et vous aurez une robe comme la mienne. Vous avez été de bonne foi avec moi, par quoi je suis on ne peut plus riche, beau doux père, de votre fortune.'

- 'Aillors vous ferai 1 bien servir;
- 'Si 2 vous ferai bien aaisier
- 'De coute-pointe et d'oreillier.
- 'Et si 2 vous di, par saint Martin,
- 'Je ne beverai mès de vin
- 'Ne ne mengerai bon morsel
- 'Que vous n'en aiez del plus bel;
- 'Et serez 1 en chambre celée
- 'Et au bon feu de cheminée;
- 'Si 2 aurez robe comme moi.
- 'Vous me fustes de bone foi,
- 'Par qoi sui riches à pooir,
- 'Biaus douz père de vostre avoir.'

² See App. IV, 2.

¹ Pronominal subject to be supplied. See App. III, 2.

CHAPTER V

ROMAN DU RENARD

The Renard: a composite work.

THE Roman du Renard, as it has come down to us. Roman du consists of a series of poems of varying lengths. written by different hands, and differing widely in style and value, the composition of which extends from the end of the twelfth to the beginning of the fourteenth century. It may be regarded, especially in its later branches, as a sort of parody, now humorous, now satirical, of the Chansons de Geste.

Theories as to its origin.

The claim to have originated this, one of the most characteristic and popular of the productions of the Middle Ages, has formed a bone of contention between the French and the Germans. Grimm claimed that the animal stories had originated amongst the forests of Germany, in those primitive times when man lived in much closer contact with his humbler brethren of the woods than in the more civilized ages. The names, indeed, of several leading personages in the drama are manifestly German, as of the fox and the wolf, Renard (Reinhart) and Isengrin (Isengrim). But in like manner several names, in the German as well as in the French versions, are as manifestly French, e.g. Noble, the lion: Chanteclair, the cock: Couard (coward), the hare, &c.; and moreover names of German origin abounded in French, having been introduced by the Frankish invaders.

Worldwide disanimalstories.

But in truth, with the progress of the science of folk-lore, the argument since Grimm's day has tion of the shifted to other ground. Like the stories which form the basis of the fabliaux, and like the fairytales which Perrault in France and Grimm in Germany caught up from the lips of oral tradition. the animal-stories are world-wide in their dissemination. Some of the incidents in the Roman du Renard are essentially identical with Greek or Roman fables, and doubtless had already a long history behind them before Aesop or Phaedrus gave them a life in literature. They may have been gathered into the Roman du Renard from the fablebooks which were so popular in the Middle Ages. or may, as some think, have been derived independently from the current of oral tradition, which flows on from age to age, and into which from time to time men of letters dip their buckets; so that, when they would seem to have borrowed one from another, they may well have drawn independently from different reaches of the same stream. The question of priority agitated between French and Germans thus resolves itself into the inquiry as to who can lay claim to the honour of first having woven together these scattered threads into one continuous web, of having taken the floating stories and grouped them about the fox and the wolf as protagonist and deuteragonist, at the same time conferring upon these vague and shadowy animal characters the individuality which accrues to them from the moment they are provided with proper names, and dubbed Renard and Isenarin, instead of the fox and the wolf.

The two most ancient versions of the poem Most which we possess are a Latin poem, Isengrinus, ancient composed about the middle of the twelfth century versions of the by a Flemish monk, Nivard, and a German poem, Renard Reinhart Fuchs (Reynard the Fox), written by an Poem. Alsatian minnesinger about 1180. The earliest branches of the French Roman du Renard are commonly, but not universally, supposed to date from the earlier part of the thirteenth century.

The interrelation of these three poems is not easy to disentangle. The Latin poem would seem to be an adaptation of poems already current. The German poem is distinguished from the extant French poems by the skill with which the separate stories have been wrought up into a consecutive and harmonious whole. An historical reference to the murder of the bishop of Laon in 1112 testifies that already at that date Isengrin was a familiar nickname in France for the wolf. It has been conjectured therefrom that the German Reinhart Fuchs was translated from an earlier French Renard. now lost, which lacked the unity of the Reinhart. and that this earlier Renard was the root-stock of the innumerable branches which sprang into existence in France during the following century. But it has also been maintained that the older extant branches of the Renard date from the twelfth century, and are in fact themselves the earlier French poem imitated by the Alsatian poet.

The primitive Renard.

If we accept the former theory, we must seek to reconstitute the primitive Renard, as far as that is possible, from the Isenarimus and the Reinhart Fuchs. It would have some such form as the following:

Revnard ticleer.

Revnard first marks out for his dupes creatures and Chan-smaller and weaker than himself, and by them he is outwitted. Chantecler, the cock, is warned by a dream of the impending danger. In his dream he donned a fur-cloak, edged with ivory, and oddly enough he drew on the cloak beginning with the narrow collar. His prudent wife, Pinte, expounds the dream: the fur-cloak is the goupil 1, the ivory edging signifies the teeth, and the narrow collar the throat of the fox, and within this living cloak Chantecler will surely be enwrapped if he does not heed the omen. But he rejects the warning as

haughtily as a Caesar, and carelessly dozes off again on his dunghill. Meanwhile Revnard stealthily crawls up to him and is on him with a bound. But Chantecler, startled out of his slumbers, leaps timely aside. Then Reynard falls back on flattery. He claims kinship with Chantecler. Many a time has he heard his sire, Chanteclin. There was a songster for you! He would shut you his eyes and open you his mouth, and you could hear him for a league around! Chantecler falls into the snare. He closes his eyes and utters a long and piercing note, which ends in a shriek, for Reynard has pounced upon him and is carrying him off. The peasants follow with hue and cry. The fox! the fox! Stop thief! Stop thief!' But now Chantecler turns the tables on his captor. 'What, Master Reynard,' he says, 'will you brook the insults of these boors? If I were you, I would give them back gibe for gibe.' And so Reynard does, and has no sooner opened his mouth than Chantecler spreads his wings and flutters away to the top of the nearest tree 1

Reynard next tries to wheedle the tom-tit. Noble, Reynard the lion, the king of the beasts, has proclaimed and the universal peace—so he tells him—the barons have all sworn to observe it, the Golden Age has come again, and all humble folk are overjoyed. The animals are interchanging the kiss of peace, will not Gaffer Tom-tit bestow it on Gaffer Revnard? Gaffer Tom-tit declares himself charmed with the news. But the kiss of peace? That is another matter. Reynard is hurt. He is in good faith, in sooth he is! See now, he will shut his eyes to receive the kiss. 'Well, that's fair enough,' admits the Tom-tit. 'Are your eyes shut now? Then

¹ The story of Reynard and Chanticleer reappears in Chaucer's Tale of the Nun's Priest, and is retold by Dryden as the Tale of the Cock and the Fox.

here I come.' And Gaffer Tom-tit pops into Revnard's mouth a scrap of moss. The jaws promptly close on it with a snap. But that was only a joke. He wanted to see if Gaffer Tom-tit really trusted him. Come now, he will shut his eves again. Gaffer Tom-tit enters into the spirit of the jokebut takes good care to keep well out of reach of those terrible jaws. 'Dear me!' complains Revnard. 'How suspicious you are! That was all very well before the peace was sworn. But come now, if only for the sake of my little godson, who is piping so sweetly on the next tree. Meanwhile the hunt approaches, with horns and hounds and tallyho. Revnard gathers himself together for flight. 'Stay, Reynard,' taunts the Tom-tit. 'Stay and be kissed. What is your hurry? Has not the peace been sworn? 'Sworn, aye,' retorts Reynard, 'but not published. Perhaps these young hounds have not vet heard of it. Besides. I have pressing business elsewhere '1

The Fox and the Crow.

The Fox and the Cat.

Reynard and Isengrin. Then follows a variant of the fable of *The Fox and the Crow*, in which Reynard gets the cheese, but not the daintier morsel, the crow himself, as he had intended. In a bout of wits with Tibert the cat he comes off still worse, for he himself is caught in a snare which he had meant for the other, and only escapes bruised and wounded.

After these preliminary encounters, in which he has cut so sorry a figure, Reynard enters on a veritable career of triumph. With Isengrin the wolf he forms an unholy alliance, the first fruits of which are a side of bacon; Reynard's wits it was that won the prize, but the greedy wolf devours it all. Now it is war to the knife between them. Again and again the friendship is patched up, and every time the thick-witted Isengrin is betrayed

¹ See La Fontaine's fable, Le Coq et le Renard, p. 257.

into some new snare. He is led by Reynard into a cellar where he gets drunk, and singing in his cups attracts the peasants, who cudgel him to within an ace of death. He learns from Reynard how to fish for eels by letting his tail hang down into the freezing water, which closing around it grips him fast. Again he is well drubbed by the peasants. and leaves his tail behind him.

On another occasion Revnard has imprudently Isengrin

entered a bucket, which carried him down to the inthe well. bottom of a well. Fortune sends Isengrin that way, who hears his calls for help. The rogue persuades the easily gulled wolf that he is dead, and that his soul is lapped in the delights of Paradise, a Paradise of foxes and wolves, teeming with good fat pullets, not to speak of higher game. If Isengrin would share in these joys, let him get into the bucket that hangs at the mouth of the well. Now there were two buckets, attached to the two ends of a rope which wound round the windlass, serving as counterpoise one to the other, so that, as the full bucket ascended, the empty one descended to take its place in the water. Reynard is in the lower bucket, and the greater weight of Isengrin carries him up. as it carries Isengrin down, so that they meet half-way. 'Just the way of the world,' chaffs Reynard as they pass, 'the one rises, the other falls'; and, leaping lightly out as the bucket reaches the kerb, he leaves his dupe to spend the night at the bottom of the well, and to be well drubbed as usual when the peasants come to draw water in the morning. And so the game goes on right merrily.

Meanwhile Reynard has made many enemies, and when Noble the king falls ill, and summons all his subjects to a gathering, in the hope that one of them may be able to suggest a remedy, the ill-will against Revnard finds utterance, and the king

Reynard and Bruin. decides that he shall be cited three times, as the custom was, to appear and defend himself. Bruin the bear is the first messenger. Under the pretext of regaling him with honey, Reynard leads him to a great tree which the woodcutters have left halfsplit, with the wedges still in. There, in that cleft, is honey and to spare. Bruin eagerly thrusts in his snout and forepaws, whereupon Reynard strikes out the wedges, and leaves him pinned in the cleft, overloading him with taunts. The luckless Bruin only escapes from the woodcutters next morning at the cost of a piece of his skin, and of course with the regulation cudgelling.

Reynard and Tibert.

Tibert the cat has no better luck. Revnard takes him a-mousing to a hen-roost he wots of, and sends him in first by a hole where, as he well knows, a springe has been set for his own behoof. Tibert is taken in it, and again the farce ends with cudgel-Revnard has not bettered his case by his contumacy, but trusting in his wits he goes cheerfully to Court at last with his cousin Grimbert the badger. He has his story pat. He has been ransacking all Europe to find a remedy for his sovereign lord, and, thanks be to Heaven, not without success. Let His Majesty wrap himself up in the skin of the wolf. freshly drawn from his body; let him flay the cat, and muffle his feet in the fur; and let him cut himself a girdle from the hide of the bear, and he will be himself again. The king takes his advice, Revnard is rid of his enemies, his triumph is complete,

Triumph of Reynard.

Final

The Renard of Pierre de Saint-Cloud.

In the oldest extant French branch the unifying principle is found in the biographical treatment of the subject, the poem beginning with the birth of Renard and Isengrin, who spring from the sea at the touch of a magic wand given by God to Adam and Eve. At first they live in concord, but Renard steals Isengrin's bacon, and thus the feud begins. This branch was the work of Pierre de Saint-Cloud.

An anonymous contemporary, who took up the subject in his turn, reproached Pierre with having missed the cream of the matter by his neglect of the court of judgement held by Noble the lion, which had already formed a subordinate feature in the Reinhart Fuchs He made this the central motive of his own version. This is the branch known as the Jugement de Renard. In it the anthropo-The morphism assumes a more decided character. In Jugement the original stories, though human passions and de Renard. motives and human speech are attributed to the animals, their actions are in general such as are in keeping with their own natures. In the new branch the characters resemble human beings only thinly disguised as animals, and the poem becomes a parody of the Chansons de Geste, a travesty of the feudal system. Renard and Isengrin are two barons at feud, of whom the one arraigns the other before the court of their suzerain. The king is wrought up to indignation by a pathetic spectacle—the funeral procession of an innocent denizen of the poultry-vard, whose untimely death is laid at the door of Reynard. The victim is interred with every honour in a splendid marble tomb, with an appropriate epitaph, and as she died a martyr miracles are performed at her tomb. Revnard is duly summoned to appear and defend himself, first by Bruin the bear, then by Tibert the cat, and shows his contempt for the court by sending its ushers back in pitiable plight, as already related. At the instances of his kinsman, Grimbert the badger, however, he finally condescends to appear before the tribunal, where he is overwhelmed with accusations and condemned to be hanged. The gallows are already erected when he demands to be allowed to take the Cross. His prayer is granted, on condition that he never returns. But he retires to his castle of Malpertuis, where he fortifies himself

and sustains a siege in due form. Taken captive in a nocturnal sortie, he scrapes the gallows, and

again escaping is formally outlawed.

Success of the Junement de Renard.

This branch of the romaunt, in the structural skill wherewith the detached episodes have been woven into a connected whole, in the spirit of rollicking fun which pervades it, in its trenchant satire of mediaeval customs and institutions, is one of the masterpieces of the literature of the Middle Ages. It was the model of the various Flemish and German versions. Goethe himself not disdaining to handle it: and most of the later French branches followed it in adopting the device of the 'judgement' as the thread on which the scattered stories might be most effectively strung together.

The later branches: their posatirical character.

The aesthetic value of these later branches is in general slight. They share in the general decadence litical and of creative literature characteristic of the late thirteenth and the fourteenth century. There is no longer any pretence at keeping up the illusion that the characters are animal: they are frankly human in actions and passions. The riot of sheer fun gives way to acrid satire. Revnard is no longer a mere figment of fancy, a tricksy sprite as irresponsible as Puck himself, pitting his wits against superior brute strength, more for the fun of the thing than for any material advantage, and receiving absolution from us after each roguish prank in a burst of sympathetic laughter. He is the spirit of treacherous cunning, of self-seeking malice, of triumphant knavery amongst men, hated by his portrayer with an envenomed hatred and branded by him for our loathing. He is, in fine, the very incarnation of the Spirit of Evil, visibly present in the unscrupulous manipulation of the privileges of the Church and the authority of the State for the enslavement of mankind.

In the popular Reynard romance the malcontents, the red radicals and ultra-democrats of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, found a convenient framework for their denunciations of an organization of society grown irksome and indeed already crumbling away. The Couronnement de Couronne. Renard (late thirteenth century), in which Revnard ment de succeeds to the crown on the demise of Noble. Renard. heaping favours on the great and oppressing the humble, would seem to be a lament for the decay of chivalrous virtues, and certainly is a bitter invective against the orders of mendicant friars. Renard le Nouveau (end of thirteenth century) Renard le spares the high dignitaries neither of Church nor Nouveau. of State: the world is filled with falseness, covetousness has built a bridge therein where prelates, abbots, kings, princes, and counts pass and repass continually. Renard le Contrefait (beginning of Renard le fourteenth century) is inspired by yet more virulent Contrefait. hostility towards the Church and the nobility. the gentleman never had an heir nor the she-wolf a cub, and were there no battle-steed, all the world would live at peace.' Of little value as literature. these poems are highly interesting documents for the study of the social and political changes—the decay of the feudal system and the rise of the bourgeoisie-which are the outstanding features of the period during which they were composed, and which make of it in some sort the 'eighteenth century' of the Middle Ages (cf. p. 104).

ROMAN DU RENARD

How Reynard made Isengrin fish for Eels.

C'était un peu avant Noël, lorsqu'on mettait dans le sel les flèches de lard. Le ciel était clair et étoilé, et le

> Ce fu un poi devant Noël, Que l'en metoit bacons en sel, Li ciex fu clers et estelez,

vivier était si bien gelé où devait pêcher Isengrin qu'on aurait pu danser dessus, sauf qu'il y avait un trou fait par des vilains, où chaque soir ils menaient s'ébattre et boire leur bétail. Un seau y était laissé. Là vint Renard ventre à terre, et appela son compère.

'Sire,' fait-il, 'venez par ici. Il y a ici force poissons, et aussi l'appareil avec lequel nous pêchons les anguilles et les barbeaux et d'autres poissons bons et beaux.' Isengrin dit: 'Sire Renard, prenez-le donc d'un côté et attachez-le-moi bien à la queue.' Renard le prend et le lui noue de son mieux autour de la queue. 'Frère,'

Et li vivier fu si gelez. Ou Ysengrin devoit peschier. Qu'on pooit par desus treschier. Fors tant c'un pertuis i avoit, Qui des vilains faiz i estoit. Ou il menoient lor atoivre Chascune nuit juer et boivre : Un séel i estoit laissiez. La vint Renarz toz eslaissiez. Et son compere apela. 'Sire,' fait-il, 'traiiez vos ça: 'Ci est la plenté des poissons 'Et li engins ou nos peschons 'Les anguiles et les barbiaus 'Et autres bons poissons et biaus,' Dist Ysengrins: 'sire Renart. 'Or le prenez de l'une part, 'Sel 1 me laciez bien a la geue.' Renarz le prent et si li 2 neue Entor la geue au miex qu'il puet.

¹ I. e. si le.

² The acc. le is understood, cf. Eng. 'takes and ties it'.

fait-il, 'maintenant il faut vous tenir bien sagement, pour que les poissons viennent.'

Alors il s'est caché en un buisson et a mis son museau entre ses pattes, pour voir ce qu'il va faire. Et Isengrin est sur la glace, et le seau dans la fontaine, tout plein de glaçons par bonne chance.

L'eau commence à geler, et le seau à s'attacher, qui était noué à la queue ; il était bien entouré de glaçons.

La queue est gelée en l'eau et scellée dans la glace. Lui commence à se soulever et croit tirer en haut le seau. Il s'y essaie de mainte façon, il ne sait que faire, il est en

^{&#}x27;Frère,' fait-il, 'or vos estuet 'Moult 1 sagement a maintenir 'Por les poissons avant venir.' Lors s'est en un buisson fichiez: Si 2 mist son groing entre ses piez Tant que il voie que il face, Et Ysengrins est seur la glace, E li seaus en la fontaine Plains de glaçons a bone estraine. L'aive conmence a englacier Et li seaus a enlacier Qui a la geue fu noez: De glaçons fu bien serondez. La qeue est en l'aive gelee Et en la glace seelee. Cil se conmence a soufachier, Le seel quide amont sachier; En mainte guise s'i essaie, Ne set que faire, moult s'esmaie.

bien (Lat. multum).

² See App. IV, 2.

grand émoi, il commence à appeler Renard, car il ne veut plus rester là, vu que l'aube a déjà éclaté.

Renard a levé la tête, il le regarde et ouvre les yeux. 'Sire,' fait-il, 'voyons, quittons la besogne. Allons-nous-en, beau et doux ami, nous avons pris assez de poissons.'

Et Isengrin lui cria: 'Renard,' fait-il, 'il y en a trop. J'en ai tant pris, que je ne le saurais dire.'

Et Renard de rire, et de lui dire tout carrément : 'Qui tout convoite, tout perd.'

La nuit passe, l'aube éclate, le soleil se lève au matin. Les voies étaient blanches de neige. Et messire Con-

> Renart 1 conmence a apeler. Qu'2 ileques ne volt plus ester, Que 2 ja estoit l'aube crevee. Renarz a sa teste levee. Si 3 le regarde et les euz ovre. 'Sire,' fait-il, 'gar 4 laissiez ovre, 'Alon nos ent, biax doz amis, 'Assez avons de poissons pris.' Et Ysengrin li escria: 'Renart,' fait-il, 'trop en i a; 'Tant en ai pris, ne sai que dire.' Et Renarz conmenca a rire. Si li a dit tot en apert: 'Cil qui tot covoite, tot pert.' La nuit trespasse, l'aube crieve, Li souleuz par matin se lieve : De noif furent les voies blanches, Et mesire Costant Desgranches,

¹ Renart is oblique case, Renarz being nom. The subj. of conmence, i.e. il, is to be supplied. See App. II, A. 1, and III, 2.
2 See App. IV, 3.
3 See App. IV, 2.
4 See App. IV, 4.

stant des Granches, vavasseur ¹ bien aisé, qui demeurait près de l'étang, était levé, lui et sa maison, qui était bien joyeuse et gaie.

Il a pris un cor, il appelle ses chiens, il commande qu'on mette sa selle, et ses gens crient et huent. Et Renard les entend, il se retourne et s'enfuit, jusqu'à ce qu'il se fourre en sa tanière. Et Isengrin reste au piège, et s'efforce bien et arrache et tire. Peu s'en faut que sa peau ne se déchire. S'il veut partir de là, il faut qu'il abandonne la queue. Pendant qu'Isengrin allait tirant, voici accourir un garçon, qui tenait en laisse deux levriers. Il voit Isengrin, il s'élance vers lui qui est fiché sur la glace, avec sa nuque toute pelée.

Un vavassor 1 bien aaisié. Qui sor l'estanc fu herbergié, Levez estoit et sa maisniee Qui moult estoit joiant et liee. Un cor a pris, ses chiens apele, Si conmande a metre sa sele, Et sa maisniee crie et huie Renarz l'oï, si torne en fuie Tant qu'en sa taisniere se fiche. Ysengrins remest en la briche, Qui moult s'esforce et sache et tire : A poi la pel ne li descire. Se d'ilec se veut departir. De sa que l'estuet partir. Que qu'Isengrins aloit tirant, Estes 2 vos un garçon corant: Deus levriers tint en une laisse, Voit Ysengrin, vers lui s'eslaisse

¹ Lit. a vassal's vassal (Lat. vassus vassorum). Practically a country squire.

Le garçon le regarde, puis s'écrie: 'Ha! ha! le loup! A l'aide! à l'aide!' Les chasseurs, quand ils l'entendent, s'élancent aussitôt de la maison, avec les chiens, à travers une haie. Alors Isengrin a grand'peur, car le sieur Constant venait après, sur un cheval au grand galop, criant à haute voix: 'Vite, vite, laissez aller les chiens!'

Les valets de chasse découplent les chiens, les braques se ruent sur le loup, et Isengrin se hérisse de tout son poil. Le vavasseur excite les chiens et les gronde vivement. Isengrin se défend très bien, il les mord à belles

> Sor la glace tot engelé Atot son hasterel pelé. Cil l'esgarde et puis s'escrie : 'Ha ha, le leu, aie, aie!' Li veneor quant il l'oirent Tantost de la maison saillirent Atoz les chiens par une haie. Adone Ysengrins fort s'esmaie, Car danz Costanz venoit aprés Sor un cheval a grant eslés, Qui moult s'escrie a l'avaler : 'Laisse, va tost, les chiens aler.' Li braconnier 1 les chiens descoplent, Et li brachet au leu s'acoplent, Et Ysengrins moult se herice. Li vavassor les chiens entice Et amoneste durement. Ysengrins moult bien se deffent:

¹ braconnier, originally, as here, the man who had charge of the dogs (les braques), now 'poacher'.

dents. Que peut-il de plus ? Il aimerait bien mieux la paix. Le sieur Constant a tiré son épée, il se prépare à frapper un grand coup. Il descendit à pied sur la place et vint au loup sur la glace. Il l'a attaqué par derrière. Il pensa le frapper, mais il manqua le coup, qui glissa de travers, et le sieur Constant tomba à la renverse, si bien que la nuque lui saigne. Il se relève à grand'peine.

Il l'attaque de nouveau, en grande colère. Maintenant vous allez ouïr une guerre atroce. Il pensa à le frapper sur la tête, mais le coup tomba de l'autre côté. L'épée descend vers la queue, il la lui a coupée tout au ras.

And so Isengrin escapes, leaving his tail in pawn, and breathing vengeance against Reynard.

As denz les mort: qu'en puet il mais? Assez amast il miex la pais. Danz Costanz a l'espee traite Et por grant cop ferir s'afaite. A pié descendi en la place Et vint au leu devers la glace : Par deriere l'a asailli, Ferir le cuida, si failli, Li cous li cola en travers E danz Constanz chai envers Si que li hateriaus li saine. Il se relieve a grant paine. Par grant air le va requerre. Ore orrez ja moult fiere guerre: Ferir le cuida en la teste. Mais d'autre part li cous s'arreste, Vers la geue descent l'espee. Tot res a res li a coupee.

CHAPTER VI

ROMAN DE LA ROSE

Joint Authors.

THE Romaunt of the Rose is the work of two Guillaume de Lorris, writing about 1230, contributed 4.000 odd lines. Jean de Meun, taking up the work of his predecessor forty years or more after his death, carried it to a conclusion in some 10,000 additional lines.

The Poem of Guil. laume de Lorris

The poem of Guillaume de Lorris is an Art of Love. inspired by and in part imitated from Ovid's Ars Amoris. Unlike Ovid, however, Guillaume teaches not by precept but by example. The poem is accordingly an allegorical presentment of a love affair. The veil of allegory with which the poet has invested his literal meaning is borrowed from the courtly epic of Chrestien de Troves and his followers. It is the quest of the beloved through difficulties and dangers. But the theatre of the action is not the fantastic fairy-world of the Arthurian epic-it is the soul itself of the beloved; and for the knights and monsters, the fairies and enchanters, who frustrate or further the quest, are substituted personifications of the fluctuating feelings of the maiden, which impel her in turn to smile or frown upon the lover's suit.

Allegory before de Lorris.

The poetry of the Middle Ages was permeated with allegory, even before Guillaume de Lorris. Guillaume We may trace this tendency to the influence of the mediaeval Church, which—following the example of the Gospels-sought to convey religious and moral lessons through the agency of parable, and pressed the whole of the universe into its service to this end. To judge from the treatises of Natural History

which abounded throughout the Middle Ages. Bestiaires, Volucraires, Lapidaires, beast-books, birdbooks, gem-books, the whole of animate and inanimate nature would seem to have been created to the unique end that man might ever have before his eyes a series of abstract moral lessons embodied in the concrete forms of creation. Thus Guillaume de Lorris did not initiate the use of allegory in poetry. He was even indebted for individual conceptions to his predecessors, e.g. for the root-idea of his poem, the wooing and winning of a maiden's love figured under colour of the quest after and plucking of a rose in the Garden of Love. But he was the first to elaborate allegory at epic length, and with the amazing success of the Romaunt of the Rose allegory became an obsession which French poetry did not shake off until with the Renaissance its place was taken by the pagan mythology of Greece and Rome.

The insubstantiality of the allegorical pageantry Outline of carried with it almost as a matter of course the the Poem setting of a dream. In a dream then, so our poet laume de tells us, he found himself on a beautiful May morning, Lorris, the appropriate season of love, wandering in the country to hear the lark and the nightingale, There he came upon a battlemented wall, whereon were represented by allegorical statues Hatred, Vileness, Boorishness, Greed with crooked fingers, Avarice in foul rags and with drawn features, squinting Envy and pallid Sadness, Old Age, Hypocrisy, and Poverty. In that they were without the wall it was figured forth that none of these might enter within its charmed circuit. Our dreamer was admitted through a little gate by a noble damsel, Idleness, the friend of Pleasure. into a garden of delight which the latter had caused to be planted for his diversion. There on a fair green lawn were dancing Pleasure with Joy, Love

with Beauty, and the like more allegorical couples. There was also an orchard, abounding in fruit-trees and spicy herbs, where harmless woodland creatures frolicked, and babbling springs gushed forth amongst grass and flowers. There was a marble fountain in the shadow of a giant pine-tree, with the inscription: Here did the beauteous Narcissus vine to death. It was the Fountain of Love, and beneath its crystal waters lay a mirror—a cunning snare of Love—wherein the orchard was reflected. In it the dreamer spied a rose-bud, which he was fain to pluck, but was refrained by fear of the thorny hedge which fenced it round. Love, who was ambushed near, wounded him with five arrows. Beauty, Candour, Sincerity, Courtesy, Sweet Converse, and he owned himself the liegeman of his victor, who expounded to him the pains and pleasures to be found in his service. Encouraged by Fair Reception (the maiden's first artless response to her lover's advances), he stepped forward to pluck the Rose, but Danger (maiden covness), with Reproach. Fear, and Shame for companions, sprang from hiding and thrust him back. Reason took him to task. Friend counselled him to make his peace with Danger, and the dreamer was again permitted to see Fair Reception, who vouchsafed to let him kiss the Rose. But angry Danger summoned Jealousy, who built a wall about the Rose and imprisoned Fair Reception in a tower. The poem breaks off in the midst of the plaints of the lover at this untoward turn in his fortunes.

Here Jean de Meun took up the pen which had fallen from Guillaume's hand. But though he adopted the allegorical framework and the general scheme of his predecessor, the two parts of the poem bear the imprint of two minds as wide asunder as the poles. Guillaume de Lorris is romantic, idealistic, sentimental; Jean de Meun is matter-of-

Contrasting characters of

fact, realistic, cynical. The former is of the stuff the two whereof the dreamer and the mystic are made. Poets. who clothe the crude realities of life with the glamour of poetry: the second is of another fibre. He is of the reformers and the revolutionaries, who shatter old conventions and rudely pluck aside the veil of illusion in which the poets seek to shroud the prosaic and sordid sides of human existence

Again, Guillaume de Lorris is little of a scholar, His erudition scarcely extends beyond the Latin love-poets, Ovid in particular, and the epics and lyries of chivalry. But Jean de Meun is profoundly Encycloversed in nearly all the Latin authors known to us paedic moderns. And, like Milton, he has mastered all the of Jean de science of his day. He is so fully abreast of his Meun. times in this respect that he is familiar with the works of his contemporary, Roger Bacon, the great scientific innovator of the age. He has studied optics and the theory of mirrors, the motions of the heavenly bodies, the problems of alchemy and the philosopher's stone. He even anticipates a topic so ultra-modern as the phenomenon of dual personality. Like another Lucretius he wages war on superstition. He disbelieves in ghosts, in witches, in the fulfilment of dreams. He mocks at the fears inspired by meteors and eclipses, and shows himself both rationalist and democrat in one when he declares, speaking of comets, that 'neither are princes worthy that the heavenly bodies should foretoken their death any more than that of a poor man'. He is versed in metaphysics, too, and handles like a theologian the question of free-will and predestination. And he is much more concerned to make of his poem a vehicle for the display of all this multifarious lore than merely to chart in it the rocks and reefs, the adverse currents and favouring gales of a Lover's Progress; so much so

that the poem becomes in his hands a very circle of the sciences, or rather, as has been well said, an

'ill-arranged library'.

The fearless and unconventional thinker lived in a congenial age. During the thirteenth century a revolution was in preparation akin to that which was accomplished in the eighteenth century. As this led to the triumph of democracy over monarchy, that led to the triumph of democracy leagued with monarchy over feudalism. Jean de Meun, intolerant of ignorance, of convention, of privilege, played in it such a part as has earned for him the nickname of The 'Vol. the 'Voltaire of the Middle Ages'. Like Voltaire he was an iconoclast, and like him he often jars upon our finer feelings in his iconoclastic zeal. With merciless hand he blights and withers the charming fictions with which as with the upheaping of delicate and fragrant flowers the poets have adorned the shrine of human love. To the romantic idealization of woman by the courtly poets he retorts with a cynical misogyny. Away with all illusions! He will tell the naked truth. But, if he strips love of all its pleasing fictions, he attacks with no less vigour the unnatural ideal of monkish seclusion. He falls foul of the Church. He advances audacious theories of the origin of royalty and of property which make him a predecessor of Rousseau no less than of Voltaire. He asserts the equality of men and denies the nobility of birth in words that anticipate by several centuries Burns's proud cry: 'The man's the gowd for a' that.' 'No one,' he says, 'is noble unless he be devoted to virtue, and none is plebeian save by his vices, for nobility of birth is not valid nobility.' Kings are pictures, 'which please from a distance, but seen near at hand they cease to please.' 'The body of a prince is not by the value of an apple worth more than the body of a carter, a clerk or an esquire.'

taire of the Middle Ages'.

Guillaume de Lorris writes for the old aristocratic society of the court and the castle. In the generation of Jean de Meun that order is passing away. His poem is perhaps not a conscious effort to influence the course of political and social evolution. But it breathes the spirit of inquiry, of restlessness, of change; and in this, as in its exploitation of Latin literature, it points the way to the Renais-Jean de sance, though at more than a century of distance. Meun a This it is which has caused different critics to regard of the it, some as the last great monument of mediaeval Renais. French literature, some as the first great monument sance. of modern French literature.

de Lorris, that the popularity of the Romaunt of of the Roman de the Rose is due, a popularity only increased by the la Rose. susceptibilities it wounded and the polemics it provoked. A measure of this popularity is the number of manuscripts in which it survives, far surpassing that of any other literary production of the Middle Ages, and the wide distribution of these manuscripts. It early received the honours of print, at a time when France was turning her back on the monuments of her ancient literature, and it lived on, at least as a name, when they were consigned to oblivion. One of the most popular poets of the sixteenth century, Clément Marot, undertook to modernize its language. Chaucer served his apprenticeship to the technique of poetry in its translation. And though it has been blamed for rivetting the chains of allegory on French poetry till the Renaissance, we must remember—whilst admitting that in the hands of an uninspired author allegory can become the most wearisome of poetical

devices—that Dante cast his Divine Comedy into the form of an allegorical dream, that Spenser chose allegory as the canvas whereon to broider his opulent fancies, and that yet another Englishman

It is to Jean de Meun, rather than to Guillaume Popularity

dreamt an immortal dream wherein the mysteries of the Christian religion are shown, 'as in a glass darkly,' through the medium of allegory.

ROMAN DE LA ROSE. FIRST PART

Old Age and the Flight of Time.

Après était dépeinte la Vieillesse, qui était raccourcie d'un bon pied de ce qu'elle avait été autrefois : à peine si elle pouvait se nourrir elle-même, tant elle était vieille et radoteuse. Sa beauté était bien gâtée, elle était devenue bien laide. Elle avait toute la tête chenue et blanche, comme si elle était toute fleurie. Ce ne serait ni grande perte ni grand péché si elle venait à mourir, car tout son corps était séché et ratatiné de vieillesse.

Son visage était maintenant bien flétri, qui jadis avait

Après fu Viellece portraite, Qui estoit bien un pié retraite De tele com el soloit ¹ estre; A paine se pooit-el pestre, Tant estoit vielle et radotee. Bien estoit sa biauté gastee; Et moult ert lède devenue. Toute sa teste estoit chenue, Et blanche com s'el fust florie. Ce ne fust mie grant morie, S'ele morust, ne grans péchiés, Car tous ses cors estoit séchiés De viellece et anoiantis. Moult estoit jà ses vis flétris, Qui jadis fut soef ² et plains;

¹ avait coutume (Lat. solere).

² smooth (Lat. suavis).

été uni et rond. Maintenant il était tout plein de rides. Elle avait les oreilles velues, et elle avait perdu toutes les dents, à tel point qu'il ne lui en restait pas une seule. Elle était si extrêmement vieille, qu'elle n'aurait pu aller l'espace de quatre toises sans béquille.

Le Temps, qui s'en va nuit et jour, sans prendre repos ni faire séjour, et qui se sépare et se dérobe de nous si furtivement qu'il nous semble qu'il s'arrête toujours en un point; (et pourtant il ne s'y arrête point, mais ne cesse jamais de passer outre, de sorte qu'on ne peut même penser quel est ce temps qui est présent. Allez

> Mès or est tous de fronces plains. Les oreilles avoit mossues Et trestotes les dens perdues. Si qu'ele n'en avoit neis 1 une. Tant par estoit de grant viellune Qu'el n'alast mie la montance De quatre toises sans potance. Li Tens.2 qui s'en va nuit et jor. Sans repos prendre et sans séjor : Et qui de nous se part et emble Si céléement, qu'il nous semble Qu'il s'arreste adès en un point, Et il ne s'i arreste point, Ains ne fine de trespasser, Que nus ne puet neis penser Quex 3 tens ce est qui est presens, S'el 4 demandés as clers lisans :

¹ pas même (Lat. ne ipsum).
² The construction is involved, but not difficult to disentangle.
Here begins a long parenthesis descriptive of Time. It ends with 'Li Tens l'avoit vieillie'. This parenthesis is itself interrupted at 'Il ne s'i arreste point', and yet another parenthesis is inserted at 'Sel demandez'.
² Quel.
² i.e. Si le.

donc le demander aux doctes clercs. Car avant qu'on l'eût pensé, trois temps seraient déjà passés.) Le Temps, qui ne peut séjourner, mais qui va toujours sans retourner, comme l'eau qui descend toute, et pas une goutte ne retourne en arrière; le Temps, contre qui rien ne dure, ni fer, ni aucune chose, si dure soit elle, car il gâte et mange tout; le Temps qui change toute chose, qui tout fait croître et tout nourrit, et qui tout use et tout pourrit; le Temps qui vieillit nos pères, qui vieillit rois et empereurs, et qui nous vieillira tous, à moins que la Mort ne nous surprenne.

Le Temps, qui a tout en son pouvoir de vieillir les gens, l'avait vieillie si durement, à mon avis, qu'elle ne pouvait

> Aincois que l'en l'éust pensé, Seroit-il ià trois tens passé: Li Tens qui ne puet séjourner, Ains vait tous jours sans retorner. Com l'iaue qui s'avale toute, N'il n'en retorne arcière goute : Li Tens vers qui noient ne dure. Ne fer, ne chose, tant soit dure, Car il gaste tout et menjue : Li Tens qui tote chose mue, Qui tout fait croistre et tout norist : Et qui tout use et tout porrist : Li Tens qui enviellist nos pères. Qui viellist rois et emperières, Et qui tous nous enviellira. Ou Mort nous désavancera : Li Tens, qui toute a la baillie Des gens viellir, l'avoit viellie Si durement qu'au mien cuidier

plus s'aider, mais retombait déjà en enfance, car certes elle n'avait ni puissance, m'est avis, ni force, ni sens, pas plus qu'un enfant de deux ans. Néanmoins, à ma connaissance, elle avait été sage et gentille, quand elle était en son bel âge, mais je crois qu'elle n'était plus sage; elle était au contraire devenue toute sotte. Elle avait, comme je me souviens, bien abrité et vêtu son corps d'un manteau de fourrure; elle était bien vêtue et chaudement, car autrement elle aurait eu froid, car les vieilles gens ont bientôt froid; vous savez bien que c'est leur nature.

El ne se pooit mès aidier. Ains retornoit jà en enfance, Car certes el n'avoit poissance, Ce cuit-ge, ne force ne sens Ne plus c'un enfes de deus ans. Neporquant, au mien escient, Ele avoit esté sage et gent. Quant ele iert en son droit aage. Mais ge cuit qu'el n'iert mès sage, Ains iert trestote rassotée. Si ot d'une chape forrée Moult bien, si com je me recors. Abrié et vestu son cors: Bien fu vestue et chaudement. Car el éust froit autrement. Les vielles gens ont tost froidure : Bien savés que c'est lor nature.

ROMAN DE LA ROSE. SECOND PART

'The rank is but the guinea stamp.'

Et si quelqu'un ose me contredire, et se vante de noblesse, disant que les gentilshommes, ainsi que le peuple les estime, sont de meilleure condition par noblesse de naissance que ceux qui cultivent la terre ou qui vivent de leur travail, je réponds que nul n'est noble, à moins qu'il ne soit attentif aux vertus, et que nul n'est vilain, hors par ses vices, qui le font paraître insolent et sot. Noblesse vient d'un bon cœur, car noblesse de lignage n'est pas noblesse qui vaille, si la bonté de cœur fait défaut; parce que la prouesse de ses parents doit se

Et se nus contredire m'ose Qui de gentillèce s'alose, Et die que li gentil home, Si cum li pueples les renome, Sunt de meillor condicion. Par noblèce de nacion. Que cil qui les terres cultivent Ou qui de lor labor se vivent, Ge respons que nus n'est gentis, S'il n'est as vertus ententis, Ne n'est vilains, fors par ses vices Dont il pert outrageus et nices. Noblèce vient de bon corage : Car gentillèce de lignage N'est pas gentillèce qui vaille, Por quoi bonté de cuer i faille : Por quoi doit estre en li parans La proèce de ses parens

'THE RANK IS BUT THE GUINEA STAMP' 111

montrer en lui, qui conquirent la noblesse par les grands travaux qu'ils y employèrent. Et quand ils quittèrent le monde ils emportèrent toutes leurs vertus, et ne laissèrent à leurs héritiers que leur avoir, puisqu'ils ne purent avoir d'eux autre chose. Ils ont leur avoir, ils n'ont rien de plus, à moins qu'ils ne fassent tant qu'ils soient nobles par le sens ou la vertu qu'ils ont.

Qui la gentillèce conquistrent
Par les travaus que grans i mistrent
Et quant du siècle trespassèrent,
Toutes lor vertus emportèrent,
Et lessièrent as hoirs l'avoir;
Que plus ne porent d'aus avoir.
L'avoir ont, plus riens n'i a lor,
Ne gentillèce ne valor,
Se tant ne font que gentil soient
Par sens ou par vertu qu'il aient.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHRONICLERS

VILLEHARDOUIN

The earliest strictly literary monuments of French prose do not go further back than the twelfth

Thenceforward they become increasingly numerous, in the form of sermons, prose romances, and histories or chronicles. It must be remembered that side by side with the first faltering utterances in the popular tongue, or rather almost without intermission from the old Roman days. there had continued to be produced in the convents History in a learned literature in the Latin language, which concerned itself particularly with history. But the popular history-books of the Middle Ages were the History in Chansons de Geste. The birth of history, as distinguished from epic poetry, may be traced to the curiosity awakened by the crusades, to the hunger of those left at home for news of the stirring deeds of their heroic countrymen in those strange Eastern lands which were as full of marvels as the Arthurian romances themselves. First cast in the familiar form of the Chansons de Geste, these narratives soon began to be couched in prose; the eagerness for the truth and nothing but the truth could not tolerate the inaccuracies induced by the metrical form.

Villehar-Fourth Crusade.

Latin.

the Ver-

nacular.

The Fourth Crusade (1202-4) was in sober truth douin and as strange an epic as the wildest romance that ever sprang from the brains of a trouvère. It is narrated for us by Geoffroy de Villehardouin-who

himself played a leading part in it—in a straightforward, nervous, soldierly style, which owes nothing of its charm to aught but the clear, unvarnished presentment of the sequence of events, and which has merited for it the title of the first masterpiece

of French prose.

The Fourth Crusade, which aimed at the deliver-Results ance of the Holy Land, led to the capture of Con-of the stantinople, then still a Christian and a Greek city, Crusade, and the seat of an empire on whose throne sat the degenerate successors of Theodosius: to the establishment of a French empire, which lasted till 1261; and to the parcelling out of the old Greek soil into feudal principalities, which left their traces until the final overthrow of the Eastern empire by the Turks. Amongst those who took the Cross may be men- Notable tioned the Count Thibaut de Champagne (father of Crusaders, the trouvère of that name, v. p. 64); Baudouin, Count of Flanders; the trouvère Conon de Béthune (a crusading song by whom is given on p. 61); and

Geoffroy de Villehardouin himself.

Delegates were sent to Venice, to treat for ships to convey the host, for whom Geoffroy was spokesman before the Doge in the Church of St. Mark. A treaty was concluded, but the death of Thibaut, who was to have been the leader, all but wrecked the enterprise. Villehardouin found a successor in the person of the Marquis of Montferrat, won over other notables to the cause, and the crusaders assembled at Venice. Other difficulties arose. The The Crusaders at money ran short for the hire of the transports, and venice. the crusaders were constrained to purchase credit from the Venetians by helping them to reduce the city of Zara, which had revolted from the Republic. In the meanwhile there had arrived at Venice Alexis, the son of Isaac, till recently Emperor of Constantinople, whose brother Alexis had usurped his throne and, having put out his eyes, now held him in prison.

He besought the help of the crusaders to restore his father to the throne. The siege of Zara having been brought to a successful issue, the leaders of the crusade, not without many dissensions and defections, entered into a compact with the young Alexis, and diverted the expedition to Constantinople. Arrived there, they were dazzled by all the splendours of a decadent civilization, in comparison with which the degree of culture to which their own land had attained was little better than barbarism.

The Capture of Constantinople.

There was a moment of misgiving before the magnitude of the enterprise. 'Et sachez.' exclaims our author, 'qu'il n'y ait homme si hardi à qui la chair ne frémît, et ce ne fut pas merveille : car jamais si grande affaire ne fut entreprise par nulles gens, depuis que le monde fut créé. Yet, rash as seemed the enterprise, it was carried through, thanks largely to the gallantry of the blind old Doge of Venice, and the aged Emperor Isaac was reseated on the throne. But the young Alexis, having gained his ends, failed to keep terms with the crusading army. The trouvère Conon de Béthune bearded him in the throne-room with a defiance in all the forms of chivalry, and the war began. The city was in the end taken and sacked—'never, since the world began, was there so much booty taken in one city -and the lands were divided amongst the victors. Baudouin being elected emperor. We shall not here follow Villehardouin in his account of the wars waged by the conquerors to confirm themselves in the possession of the spoils. He himself received as his portion the city of Messinople, in Thrace, where in all likelihood he wrote his memoirs.

Life of Villehardouin. Of the life of Villehardouin himself practically nothing is known but what may be gathered from his own work. His birth is conjecturally set

between 1150 and 1164. He was seigneur of Villehardouin, in Champagne, where traces of a feudal castle still exist, and Marshal of Champagne. He died in 1213, in his fief, and his nephew succeeded him as prince of Achaia.

The Greeks try to burn the fleet of the Crusaders.1

Et alors les Grecs eurent la pensée d'un bien grand engin: car ils prirent dix-sept grandes nefs, et les emplirent toutes de bois gros et menu, et d'étoupes, et de poix. et de tonneaux : et attendirent que le vent soufflât de devers eux très fortement. Et une nuit, à minuit, ils mirent le feu aux nefs, et laissèrent les voiles aller au vent: et le feu s'alluma bien haut, en sorte qu'il semblait que toute la terre brûlât. Et les nefs s'en viennent ainsi vers la flotte des pèlerins : et le cri s'élève dans le camp et on court aux armes de toutes parts. Les Vénitiens

Et lors se porpenserent li Grieu d'un mult grant enging : qu'il pristrent dix sept nés granz, ses 2 emplirent totes de granz merrienz 3 et d'esprises. 4 et d'estopes, et de poiz, et de toniaus ; et attendirent tant que li venz venta de vers aus mult durement. Et une nuit, à mie nuit, mistrent le feu es nés, et laissierent les voiles aler al vent : et li feus aluma mult halt, si que il sembloit que tote la terre arsist.⁵ Et ensi s'en vienent vers les navies des pelerins : et li criz lieve en l'ost. 6 et saillent as armes de totes parz. Li Venisien corrent à lor vaissiaus, et tuit

¹ The extracts from Villehardouin and the modern French versions are reproduced from the edition by M. Natalis de Wailly, by the kind permission of Messrs. Firmin Didot Frères, Fils et Cle.

² si les, i.e. et les.
³ merrains, 'planks, beams'.
⁴ copeaux.
⁵ subj. impf. of ardoir, brûler (Lat. ardere). 4 copeaux.

courent à leurs vaisseaux, et tous les autres qui avaient des vaisseaux; et ils commencèrent à les retirer du feu bien vigoureusement.

Et Geoffroi le maréchal de Champagne, qui dicta cette œuvre, vous témoigne bien que jamais gens sur mer ne s'aidèrent mieux que ne firent les Vénitiens; car ils s'élancèrent dans les galères et les barques des nefs, et prenaient les nefs tout enflammées avec des crocs, et les tiraient de vive force hors du port devant leurs ennemis, et les mettaient dans le courant du Bras,¹ et les laissaient aller brûlant en aval du Bras. Il était venu tant de Grecs sur la rive que c'était sans fin ni mesure; et le cri était si grand qu'il semblait que la terre et la mer s'abîmassent. Et ils entraient en barques et en nacelles, et tiraient sur les nôtres qui combattaient le feu; et il y en eut de blessés.

li autre qui vaissials i avoient; et les comencent à rescore 2 dou feu mult viguerosement.

Et bien tesmoigne Joffrois li mareschaus de Champaigne, qui cest ovre dita, que onques sor mer ne s'aiderent genz mielz que li Venisien firent; qu'il sailirent es galies et es barges des nés, et prenoient les nés totes ardanz à cros, et les tiroient par vive force devant lor anemis fors del port, et les metoient el corrant del Braz,¹ et les laissoient aler ardant contreval le Braz. Des Grex i avoit tant sor la rive venuz que ce n'ere ³ fins ne mesure; et ere li criz si granz que il sembloit que terre et mers fondist. Et entroient es barges et en salvacions,⁴ et traioient as noz qui rescooient le feu; et en i ot de bleciez.

¹ The *Hellespont*, called 'le Bras de Saint Georges'.

² retirer, sauver (Eng. rescue). ³ était (Lat. erat).
⁴ Doubtless a kind of life-boat.

Les chevaliers du camp, aussitôt qu'ils eurent ouï le cri, s'armèrent tous; et les corps de bataille sortirent en plaine, chacun devant soi, selon qu'ils étaient logés; et ils craignirent que les Grecs ne les vinssent assaillir par devers la plaine.

Ils endurèrent ainsi ce travail et cette angoisse jusqu'au grand jour; mais par l'aide de Dieu les nôtres ne perdirent rien, hors une nef de Pisans, qui était pleine de marchandises; celle-là fut consumée par le feu. Ils avaient été en bien grand péril cette nuit; car si leur flotte eût brûlé, ils eussent tout perdu; et ils n'eussent pu s'en aller par terre ni par mer. C'est le prix que leur voulut payer l'empereur Alexis pour le service qu'ils lui avaient rendu.

La chevalerie de l'ost, erraument qu'ele ot oï le cri, si s'armerent tuit; et issirent les battailles as champs, chascune endroit soi, si con ele ere hebergie; et il douterent que li Grieu ne les venissent assaillir par devers les champs.

Ensi soffrirent cel travail et cele angoisse trosque à cler jor; mais par l'aïe de Dieu ne perdirent noient ² li noz, fors que une nef de Pisans qui ere plaine de marchandise; icele si fu arse ³ del feu. Mult orent esté en grant peril cele nuit; que se lor naviles fust ars, il aussent tot pardu; que il ne s'en peussent aler par terre ne par mer. Ice guerredon ⁴ lor volt rendre li empereres Alexis del service qu'il li avoient fait.

¹ sortirent (Lat. exire).

² néant, rien.

³ pt. part. of ardoir, brûlée. ⁴ récompense (Eng. guerdon).

JOINVILLE

Joinville Resemblances with Villehardonin

Jean, Sire de Joinville, was born in 1224 of a noble crusading family. Like Villehardouin, he belonged to the lesser nobility, being lord of the manor of Joinville, on the Marne. Like him again, therefore, he was a native of Champagne, so fertile in poets, and the minds of both were early formed to literary tastes in the same elegant and lettered society. Joinville himself tells us that he carved before his lord, Thibaut, Count of Champagne, the famous trouvère king of Navarre (see p. 64). Joinville was a crusader, too, accompanying his master, Louis IX, afterwards Saint Louis, on the Sixth Crusade (1248-54). Nevertheless, like Villehardouin again, he never saw the Holy City; but, unlike Villehardouin, he returned to his own castle, where he died in 1319, at the age of 95 years.

Joinville nicler contrasted with Villehardouin.

Joinville did not take up his pen to write a conas a Chro- nected narrative until 1309, when he was 85 years old. And whereas Villehardouin wrote as a soldier. cleaving close in his narrative to the main lines of an action of which he himself had held the strings in his hand. Joinville writes rather as an onlooker, with an eye for the picturesque incident rather than for the sinews of the stratagem. He is ever ready to turn aside and gossip charmingly about the quaint sights and romantic happenings which meet him on the road.

Joinville and Saint Louis.

Perhaps the greatest charm of Joinville's work is in its portrayal of the characters of his royal master and of himself, the first intended, the second incidental. Master and servant, they remind us irresistibly of those immortal types of the idealist and the realist, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza-Louis, austere, simple-hearted, quixotically just, a very knight-errant of religion, the peerless lady to whose service he has vowed himself, admitting of no parley if her fair fame is assailed in his presence. but ready to 'défendre la chose non pas seulement de paroles, mais à bonne espée tranchante, et en frapper les mécréants au travers du corps tant qu'elle y pourra entrer'; Joinville, fond of creature comforts, of festes et quarolles (banquets and dances), who naïvely confesses, to his master's great scandal. that he would rather have committed thirty mortal sins than be smitten with leprosy; who, urged by his master to put water in his wine, pleads an obliging dictum of his physician to the effect that it is better suited to his constitution to take his wine neat: who retains a vivid recollection of the sea-sickness which afflicted him during his voyage; who scouts the idea that he should show his faith by washing the feet of the poor (ces vilains) on Holy Thursday: whose heart is in his boots in the face of danger (though he acquitted himself valiantly enough on occasion); and who, when dragged over sea by his master, very much against the grain, and not trusting himself, when passing before his castle of Joinville, to turn his eyes upon it, 'pour ce que le cuer ne me attendrist du biau chastel que je lessoie, et de mes deux enfants,' has nevertheless tucked away in a corner of his heart, even as Sancho pined for the government of an island, the hope that his knight-errantry may lead to the material guerdon of some principality in the magic East which had so richly rewarded the adventurous undertakers of the Fourth Crusade.

Fortune was kinder to him, and brought him back through many dangers safe and sound to his 'biau chastel', whence he refused point-blank to budge when his master summoned him to join his ill-fated second crusade, which ended in the death from plague before the walls of Tunis of himself and of the greater part of his army. The good 'Sancho' had had enough of knight-errantry, and remained

Histoire de saint Louis. behind to testify for the canonization of Louis, and to write in his old age the *Histoire de saint Louis*. The work was undertaken at the instance of Jeanne de Navarre, wife of Philippe le Bel, and was based in part on the writings of other historiographers, and upon the personal recollections of the king's own son, but the most fascinating part was drawn from the early notes and doubtlessly frequently renewed reminiscences of Joinville himself.

The Crusaders embark, August, 1248.1

Au mois d'août, nous entrâmes dans nos nefs à la Roche-de-Marseille. Le jour que nous entrâmes dans nos nefs, l'on fit ouvrir la porte de la nef, et l'on mit dedans tous nos chevaux que nous devions mener outremer; et puis on referma la porte et on la boucha bien, comme quand on noie un tonneau, parce que, quand la nef est en haute mer, toute la porte est dans l'eau.

Quand les chevaux furent dedans, notre maître nautonier cria à ses nautoniers, qui étaient à la proue de la nef,

Au mois d'aoust, entrames en nos neis ² à la Roche de Marseille. A celle journée que nous entrames en nos neis, fist l'on ouvrir la porte de la nef, et mist l'on touz nos chevaus ens ³ que nous deviens mener outre mer; et puis reclost l'on la porte et l'enboucha l'on bien, aussi comme l'on naye un tonnel, ⁴ pour ce que, quant la neis est en la grant mer, toute la porte est en l'yaue. ⁵

Quant li cheval furent ens, nostre maistres notonniers ⁶ escria à ses notonniers, qui estoient ou bec de la nef,

¹ The extracts from Joinville and the Modern French versions are reproduced from the edition of M. Natalis de Wailly, by the kind permission of Messrs. Firmin Didot Frères, Fils et C^{ie}.

² Pl. of nef (Lat. navis).

³ dedans (Lat. intus).

⁴ noie un tonneau, 'soaks a cask to make it water-tight'.
5 cau.
6 nautonier, nom. sing.

et leur dit: 'Votre besogne est-elle prête?' Et ils répondirent: 'Oui, sire; que les clercs et les prêtres s'avancent.' Aussitôt qu'ils furent venus, il leur cria: 'Chantez, de par Dieu!' Et ils s'écrièrent tout d'une voix: Veni, creator Spiritus. Et le maître cria à ses nautoniers: 'Faites voile, de par Dieu!' Et ainsi firent-ils.

Et en peu de temps le vent frappa sur les voiles et nous eut enlevé la vue de la terre, tellement que nous ne vîmes que le ciel et l'eau; et chaque jour le vent nous éloigna des pays où nous étions nés. Et par là je vous montre que celui-là est bien follement hardi qui s'ose mettre en tel péril avec le bien d'autrui ou en péché mortel; car l'on s'endort le soir là où on ne sait si l'on se trouvera au fond de la mer au matin.

et lour dist: 'Est arée ¹ vostre besoigne?' Et il respondirent: 'Oil, sire; vieingnent² avant li clerc et li provere.' Maintenant que il furent venu, il lour escria: 'Chantez, de par Dieu!' Et il s'escrierent tuit à une voix: Veni creator Spiritus. Et il escria à ses notonniers: 'Faites voile, de par Dieu!' Et il si ⁴ firent.

Et en brief tens li venz se feri ⁵ ou voile, et nous ot tolu ⁶ la veue de la terre, que nous ne veismes que ciel et yaue; et chascun jour nous esloigna li venz des païs où nous aviens estei nei. ⁷ Et ces choses ⁸ vous moustré-je que cil est bien fol hardis ⁹ qui se ose mettre en tel peril atout autrui chatel ¹⁰ ou en péchié mortel; car l'on se dort le soir là où on ne sait se l'on se trouvera ou font de la mer au matin.

 ¹ prête.
 ² viennent, subj.
 ³ prêtres, nom. pl.
 ⁴ ainsi.
 ⁵ frappa sur la voile (Lat. ferire).
 ⁶ enlevé (Lat. tollere).
 ⁷ été nés.
 ⁸ par cette chose.
 ⁹ The Eng. foolhardy.
 ¹⁰ avec le bien d'autrui. Chatel is the Eng. chattel.

The Nile.

Il nous faut premièrement parler du fleuve qui vient par l'Égypte et du Paradis terrestre; et je vous raconte cela pour vous faire comprendre certaines choses qui touchent à ma matière. Ce fleuve est différent de toutes les autres rivières; car plus les autres rivières viennent en aval, plus il y tombe de petites rivières et de petits ruisseaux; et en ce fleuve il n'en tombe aucune: au contraire il advient ainsi qu'il vient par un seul canal jusques en Égypte, et alors il jette de lui sept branches, qui se répandent parmi l'Égypte.

Et quand a passé la saint-Remi, les sept rivières se répandent par le pays et couvrent les plaines; et quand elles se retirent, les laboureurs vont labourer chacun dans sa terre avec une charrue sans roues, avec quoi ils retour-

Il nous couvient ¹ premierement parler dou flum ² qui vient par Egypte et de Paradis terrestre; et ces choses vous ramentoif-je ³ pour vous faire entendant aucunes choses qui affierent ⁴ à ma matiere. Cis fleuves est divers de toutes autres rivieres; car quant plus viennent les autres riviere aval, et plus y chiéent ⁵ de petites rivieres et de petiz ruissiaus; et en ce flum n'en chiet nulles: ainçois ⁶ avient ⁷ ainsi que il vient touz en un chanel jusques en Egypte, et lors giete de li sept branches, qui s'espandent parmi Egypte.

Et quant ce vient après la saint-Remy⁸, les sept rivieres s'espandent par le païs et cuevrent les terres pleinnes⁹; et quant elles se retraient, li gaaingnour¹⁰ vont chascuns labourer en sa terre à une charue sanz rouelles,¹¹ de quoy

faut.
 oblique case of fluns, fleuve (Lat. flumen).
 remémore, raconte.
 touchent à, regardent.
 From choir (Lat. cadere) = tombent.
 advient, arrive.
 October 1.
 plaines.

¹⁰ laboureurs, lit. gagneurs, 11 roues.

nent dans la terre les froments, les orges, les cumins, le riz: et tout cela vient si bien que nul ne saurait quoi v amender. Et l'on ne sait pas d'où cette crue vient, sinon de la volonté de Dieu: et si elle ne se faisait, aucun bien ne viendrait dans le pays, à cause de la grande chaleur du soleil qui brûlerait tout, parce qu'il ne pleut jamais dans le pays. Le fleuve est toujours trouble : aussi ceux du pays qui en veulent boire prennent de l'eau vers le soir, et écrasent quatre amandes ou quatre fèves; et le lendemain elle est si bonne à boire que rien n'y manque.

Avant que le fleuve entre en Égypte, les gens qui sont accoutumés à le faire, jettent leurs filets déployés dans le fleuve au soir; et quand on vient au matin ils trouvent dans leurs filets ces denrées qui se vendent au poids que l'on apporte en ce pays, c'est à savoir le gingembre, la

il tornent dedens la terre les fourmens, les orges, les comminz,2 le ris: et viennent si bien que nulz n'i sauroit qu'amander.3 Ne ne sait l'on dont celle creue vient, mais que de la volontei Dieu; et se ce n'estoit, nul bien ne venroient ou païs, pour la grant chalour dou soleil qui arderoit 4 tout, pour ce que il ne pluet nulle foiz ou pays. Li fluns est touziours troubles; dont cil dou païs qui boire en vuelent, vers le soir le prennent, et esquachent 5 quatre amendes ou quatre feves; et l'endemain est si bone à boire que riens n'i faut.

Avant que li fluns entre en Egypte, les gens qui ont acoustumei 6 à ce faire, gietent lour roys 7 desliées parmi le flum au soir; et quant ce vient au matin, si treuvent en lour royz cel avoir de poiz 8 que l'on aporte en ceste terre, c'est à savoir gingimbre, rubarbe, lignaloecy 9 et

⁴ brûlerait. ¹ froments. ² cumins. ³ rien amender. 6 sont accoutumés. ⁵ écrasent.

^{*} avoir de poiz, 'goods sold by weight', cf. Eng. avoirdupois.

bois d'aloès (Lat. lignum aloes).

rhubarbe, le bois d'aloès et la cannelle. Et l'on dit que ces choses viennent du Paradis terrestre; car le vent abat les arbres qui sont en Paradis, ainsi que le vent abat dans les forêts de ce pays le bois sec; et ce qui tombe de bois sec dans le fleuve, les marchands nous le vendent en ce pays. L'eau du fleuve est de telle nature, que quand nous la suspendions (dans des pots de terre blancs que l'on fait au pays) aux cordes de nos pavillons elle devenait à la chaleur du jour aussi froide qu'eau de fontaine.

Ils disaient au pays que le soudan de Babylone avait maintes fois essayé de savoir d'où le fleuve venait; il y envoyait des gens qui emportaient une espèce de pains que l'on appelle biscuits, parce qu'ils sont cuits par deux fois; et ils vivaient de ce pain jusqu'à ce qu'ils revinssent près du soudan. Et ils rapportaient qu'ils avaient remonté le fleuve, et qu'ils étaient venus à un grand tertre

canele. Et dit l'on que ces choses viennent de Paradis terrestre; que li venz abat des arbres qui sont en Paradis, aussi comme li venz abat en la forest en cest païs le bois sec; et ce qui chiet dou bois sec ou flum, nous vendent li marcheant en ce païz. L'yaue dou flum est de tel nature, que quant nous la pendiens (en poz de terre blans que l'en fait ou païs) aus cordes de nos paveillons, l'yaue devenoit ou chaut dou jour aussi froide comme de fonteinne.

Il disoient ou païs que li soudans de Babiloine avoit mainte foiz essaié dont li fluns venoit; et y envoioit gens qui portoient une maniere de pains que l'on appelle becuis,¹ pour ce que il sont cuit par dous foiz; et de ce pain vivoient tant que il revenoient arieres au soudanc. Et raportoient que il avoient cerchié le flum, et que il estoient venu à un grant tertre de roches taillies, là où

¹ biscuits.

de roches à pic, là où nul ne pouvait monter. De ce tertre tombait le fleuve; et il leur semblait qu'il y avait une grande foison d'arbres sur la montagne en haut; et ils disaient qu'ils avaient trouvé des merveilles de diverses bêtes sauvages et de diverses façons, lions, serpents, éléphants, qui les venaient regarder de dessus la rive du fleuve, pendant qu'ils allaient en amont.

nulz n'avoit pooir ¹ de monter. De ce tertre chéoit li flums, et lour sembloit que il y eust grant foison d'arbres en la montaigne en haut; et disoient que il avoient trouvei merveilles de diverses bestes sauvaiges et de diverses façons, lyons, serpens, oliphans, ² qui les venoient regarder dessus la riviere de l'yaue, aussi comme il aloient amont.

Of the Woman who wanted to burn Paradise and to quench Hell.

(Whilst the King lay at Acre, he had occasion to send messengers to the Sultan of Damascus, and with them went Brother Yves the Breton, of the order of the Preaching Friars, who knew the Saracen tongue.)

Tandis qu'ils allaient de leur hôtel à l'hôtel du Soudan, frère Yves vit une vieille femme qui traversait la rue, et portait à la main droite une écuelle pleine de feu, et à la gauche une fiole pleine d'eau. Frère Yves lui demanda:

Tandis que il aloient de lour hostel à l'ostel dou soudanc, freres Yves vit une femme vieille qui traversoit parmi la rue, et portoit en sa main destre ³ une escuellée pleinne de feu, et en la senestre ⁴ une phiole pleinne

¹ n'avoit pooir, 'ne pouvait'. Pooir is substantive.
² éléphants.

droite (Lat. dextra). 4 gauche (Lat. sinistra).

'Que veux-tu faire de cela?' Elle lui répondit qu'elle voulait avec le feu brûler le paradis, afin qu'il n'y en eût plus jamais, et avec l'eau éteindre l'enfer, afin qu'il n'y en eût plus jamais. Et il lui demanda: 'Pourquoi veux-tu faire cela?' 'Parce que je ne veux pas que nul fasse jamais le bien pour avoir la récompense du paradis, ni par peur de l'enfer : mais simplement pour avoir l'amour de Dieu, qui vaut tant, et qui nous peut faire tout le bien possible.

d'yaue. Freres Yves li demanda: 'Que veus-tu de ce faire?' Elle li respondi qu'elle voulait dou feu ardoir ¹ paradis que jamais n'en fust point,2 et de l'vaue esteindre enfer, que jamais n'en fust point. Et il li demanda: 'Pourquoy veus-tu ce faire?' 'Pour ce que je vueil que nulz face 3 jamais bien pour le guerredon 4 de paradis avoir, ne pour la poour ⁵ d'enfer, mais proprement ⁶ pour l'amour de Dieu avoir, qui tant vaut, et qui tout le bien nous puet faire.'

FROISSART

Froissart and the Hundred Years' War

Between Joinville and Froissart, as between Villehardouin and Joinville, there elapsed a period of approximately a hundred years. It was a period of comparative sterility in historical writings, of which the reason is not far to seek. In this the childhood of history, the imaginations of men had need of some unusual stimulus, of some brilliant national triumph or some overwhelming national disaster, to provoke them to historical composition. The ages of Villehardouin and of Joinville had found this stimulus in the heroic enterprises of the crusades. From the end of the crusades to the

brûler (Lat. ardere).

2 afin qu'il n'y en eût plus jamais.

3 fasse.

4 récompense (Eng. guerdon).

5 peur.

6 simplement.

English invasions France had enjoyed a period of tranquil prosperity, and had consequently produced no great historian. These halovon days were rudely interrupted by the Hundred Years' War, which broke out in 1337, and in the same year was born

Froissart, who was to be its chronicler.

The chronicles of Froissart cover the period from Froissart, 1325 to 1400. Embracing so wide a range in the the Chronicler of scope of his writings, his methods are necessarily Hearsay very different from those of his two great predecessors. Villehardouin was a prominent actor in. Joinville an eve-witness of, the events which they respectively relate. Froissart is the chronicler of hearsay. His chronicles are indeed in a certain sense memoirs, like theirs, but they are memoirs at second hand. As a modern historian might pass from library to library, consulting this and that book and making excerpts of all that interested him, so Froissart wanders from court to court, from The city to city, from battle-field to battle-field, excerpt-Travels of ing the memories of men. From Scotland, the Froissart. ultima Thule of fourteenth-century civilization, to Italy, its very centre and sun, we find him ambling along all highroads on his grey nag, now bent upon some definite errand of research, now foregathering for days with some casual travelling-companion, for in his ardent quest after historical gossip this mediaeval Herodotus does not disdain any windfall that chance may throw in his way. He is the favourite of princes, in whose service he makes those 'beauly ditiés amoureux' which alone would have sufficed to his fame, had they not been overshadowed by the loftier monument he raised to himself in his chronicles. He knows the most puissant princes, the most brilliant generals of his time. He is welcome at all feasts, in an age which was prodigal in feasts: at those which welcomed to Paris Isabeau de Bavière as the bride of Charles VI,

as at those which welcomed to Milan the Duke of Clarence as the bridegroom of the daughter of Galeazzo Visconti, not the least notable feature of which was the presence among the guests of three such men as Froissart, Boccaccio, and Chaucer.

Froissart, the last of the Troubadours.

Froissart was, in one word, a belated troubadour, The age of chivalry, now in the heyday of its splendour, was already smitten with decay, and Froissart came just in time to seize and immortalize in his brilliant picture an order of things which was already passing away. We must not ask from him accuracy in detail. He tells what he hears, with little care to check one version by another, with little heed to correctness in names or dates or circumstances, though on the whole with an impartiality which in the light of his personal relation with the actors in his drama does him no little honour. Neither is he much concerned with the springs of the action. But he conjures up before our eyes in the most brilliant colours and with convincing truth of general impression the external features of a vanished age: he crowds his stage with all the pomp and circumstance of the camp, the tourney and the court, and fills it with the blare of the trumpet and the clash of arms; and he rivets our attention by his dramatic situations, by his sprightly dialogue, by the truth to life of the motley crowd of personages who pass into and out of his pageant.

JEAN FROISSART (1337–1410?) was born at Valenciennes in Hainault. He followed to England his fellow-countrywoman, Philippa of Hainault, the Queen of Edward III, was received into her favour, and remained in her service as secretary till her death in 1369. According to some of his biographers, the primary motive of his self-exile was the desire to find oblivion of an unhappy love, but the evidence for this love-romance is drawn only from his own poetry (e. g. the ballad quoted on p. 152), and such evidence, especially in the case of a poet who has not yet shaken

off the *trouvère*, is more than precarious. It was indeed virtually as *trouvère*, though the title was superannuated, that Froissart was attached to the service of Queen Philippa and others. But the chronicler was already budding beneath the *trouvère*, and indeed the two offices had always been closely associated.

Whilst in the service of Philippa he visited Scotland, Flanders, Brittany, Paris, Guyenne and Bordeaux, and was present at the bridal festivities of the Duke of Clarence at Milan, collecting during these voyages much of the matter of the first book of his chronicles. On the death of his royal patroness he found a new protector in the person of Wenceslas, Duke of Brabant, and, having taken holy orders, was appointed by his patron to the living of Lestines-au-Mont. During his tenure of this cure, whilst still amusing himself and his master by turning dainty little rhymes, he made the writing and revision of the first book of his chronicles the serious business of his life. Wenceslas died in 1383, and Froissart accepted from Guy de Châtillon, Count of Blois, a canonry, and was attached to the person of his new patron as chaplain. Meanwhile further voyages brought new grist to the untiring mill of his historical researches. Between 1386 and 1388 he wrote the second book of his chronicles. Then he set out for the court of Gaston Phoebus, Comte de Foix, at Béarn. On the way he had the good luck to fall in with a gentleman of the Count's suite, and spent the eight days during which they travelled together in sucking this garrulous gentleman dry during the day, and jotting down in his inn at night the anecdotes which the day had furnished. He was well received by the Count Gaston, a perfect mirror of chivalry, whose one little peccadillo was that he had, whether by accident or of set intent, killed his own son who was under suspicion of having sought to poison him. In his hostelry at Béarn he had the good fortune to fall in with a crowd of Aragonese and English adventurers, who were as so many sponges for our inveterate inquirer to squeeze. On his return he visited the papal court at Avignon.

In 1391 he lost by death his last patron, the Count of Blois, whereupon he returned to his birthplace, Valenciennes, and busied himself with the composition of the third and fourth books of his chronicles, only interrupting his now sedentary life by excursions to Bruges, Paris and Abbeville, and by a last journey to England, which he yearned to revisit in his old age.

1228

Edinburgh Castle retaken by a Ruse. 1341.

(Whilst Edward III is absent at the leaguer of Tournay, the Scotch, stirred up by the French, raid Northumberland, and wrest from the hands of the English all the strong places in Scotland, except the city of Berwick, and the castles of Stirling, Roxburgh, and Edinburgh, which latter 'standeth on a high rock, that a man must rest once or twice or he come to the highest of the hill'. The extract tells how Sir William Douglas, with Earl Patrick, Sir Simon Fraser and Alexander Ramsay, finally surprised and retook this stronghold also).¹

Quant il furent arivet, il yssirent hors par nuit et prisent jusques à XII de leurs compaignons ens èsquels ils se fioient le plus et se vestirent de povres cottes deschirées et de povres cappiaux de rude feutre, à mannière de povres marchéans, et chargièrent XII petis chevalès de XII sas, les uns emplis d'avainne, les autres de farinnes et les darrains (derniers) de carbons de fèvre ², et envoyèrent les autres embuscher en une deschirée abbéie et gastée, là où nuls ne demoroit, au desoubs de le ville de Haindebourch (Édimbourg), qui toutte arse (brûlée) estoit au piet de le montaigne dou castiel. Quant jours fu,

And in the night they armed them and took a ten or twelve of their company, such as they did trust best, and did disguise them in poor torn coats and hats, like poor men of the country, and charged twelve small horses with sacks, some with oats, some with wheat-meal, and some with coals; and they did set all their company in a bushment in an old destroyed abbey thereby, near to the foot of the hill.

And when the day began to appear, covertly armed as

¹ The extracts from the English translation of John Bourchier are reproduced from the 'Globe' edition of the Chronicles, by kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan & Co.

² 'smith', fr. Lat. *faber*.

chil marchéans qui couvertement armet estoient, s'esmurent et se misent au chemin vers le castiel atout (avec) les cevaux cargiés (chevaux chargés) enssi comme vous avés oy. Quant il furent venus jusques au piet de le montaigne qui estoit si roite (raide) et si malaisie à monter, il menèrent ces cevaux cargiés à mont au mieux qu'il peurent. Quant il vinrent en milieu de le montaigne, li dist messires Guillaumes de Douglas et Simon Fresiel allèrent devant et fissent autres venir tout bellement et s'en vinrent jusques à le porte dou castiel qui close estoit. Si appellèrent le portier et li disent qu'il avoient amenet en grant paour et en grant doubte de le cité de Bervic (Berwick) avainne, farines et carbon, et se il besongnoit, laien (là-dedans) il le venderoient vollentiers et en feroient grant marchiet, car plus avant ne le volloient mener. Li portiers leur respondi que il penssoit bien que oil (oui), mès il estoit encorres si matin que nus n'estoit descouchiés (levé) ou castiel et que il n'oseroit esvillier le castelain, ne le mestre d'ostel, mès fesissent (qu'ils fissent) avant venir le pourvéanche (la provision), il ouvreroit vollentiers le première porte de le baille (barrière).

they were, they went up the hill with their merchandise.

And when they were in the midway, sir William Douglas and sir Simon Fraser, disguised as they were, went a little before and came to the porter and said:

'Sir, in great fear we have brought hither oats and wheat-meal; and if ye have any need thereof, we will sell it to you good cheap.'

'Marry,' said the porter, 'and we have need thereof; but it is so early, that I dare not awake the captain nor his steward. But let them come in, and I shall open the outer gate.'

Chil oïrent (entendirent) vollentiers ceste parolle et fissent les cevaux passer avant jusques as portes des bailles qui furent tantost ouvertes. Messires Guillaumes de Douglas avoit bien veu que li portiers avoit touttes les clés de le grant porte dou castiel, et avoit bien demandet enssi vgnoramment laquelle deffremoit le porte et laquelle le ghuicet (quichet). Quant li porte des bailles fu ouverte. il missent ens les cevalés et en descargièrent deux qui portoient les sas (sacs) plains de carbon, droitement sus le soeil (seuil) de le porte, affin que on ne le peuist reclore. puis prissent le portier et le tuèrent si quoiement que oncques ne dist mot et prisent les clés où il tendoient, et deffremèrent le porte del castiel : puis corna li dis messires Guillaumes de Douglas ung cor, et jettèrent-il et si XII compaignons les cottes deschirées jus tantost et reversèrent les autres sas plains de carbon et de farinne au traviers de le porte, par quoy on ne le peuist clore.

And so they all entered into the gate of the bails. Sir William Douglas saw well how the porter had the

keys in his hands of the great gate of the castle.

Then when the first gate was opened, as ye have heard, their horses with carriages entered in; and the two that came last laden with coals, they made them to fall down on the ground-sill of the gate, to the intent that the gate should not be closed again.

And then they took the porter and slew him so peaceably, that he never spake word.

Then they took the great keys and opened the castlegate: then sir William Douglas blew a horn and did cast away their torn coats and laid all the other sacks overthwart the gate, to the intent that it should not be shut again.

Quant li autre compaignon qui estoient en l'enbusce eurent ov le cor sonner, il saillirent vistement hors del embuscement et coururent contre-mont le voie del castiel tant qu'il peurent. La gette (le guet), qui dormoit, adont s'esvilla au son dou cor et vit gens monter hastéemant contre-mont le voie dou castiel et tous armés : si comencha à corner et à cryer tant qu'il peult : 'Traï! Traï!' Adont s'esvilla li castellains, et tout cil de lavens (là-dedans) s'esvillèrent ossi. Si se armèrent au plus tost qu'il porent, et vinrent, qui plus tost peut, à le porte pour refremmer. mès il ne peurent, car li dis messires Guillaummes et si compaignon leur deffendirent. Adont mouteplia (multiplia) grans hustins (combats) entre vaux (eux), car chil del castiel eussent vollentiers le porte refremmée por lors vies sauver, car il percevoient bien qu'il estoient trahi; et chil qui bien avoient acompli leur emprise et leur désirier se penoient tant qu'il pooient del détenir, et tant fissent par leur proèce qu'il détinrent l'entrée tant que chil del embuschement furent parvenus à vaux.

And when they of the bushment heard the horn, in all haste they might they mounted the hill.

Then the watchman of the castle with noise of the horn awoke, and saw how the people were coming all armed to the castle-ward. Then he blew his horn and cried: 'Treason! Treason!' Then every man arose and armed them and came to the gate.

But sir William Douglas and his twelve companions defended so the gate, that they could not close it.

And so by great valiantness they kept the entry open, till their bushment came. They within defended the castle as well as they might, and hurt divers of them without; but sir William and the Scots did so much, that they conquered the fortress, and all the Englishmen within were slain, except the captain and six other squires.

PHILIPPE DE COMMYNES

Commynes and the destruction of the Feudal Power.

The deepening of diplomacy.

Yet another leap of a hundred years brings us to Communes, the last of the mediaeval chroniclers, the first of modern historians. His memoirs practically cover the reigns of Louis XI and Charles VIII. and are accordingly concerned with the last effective stand made by the great feudal lords against the assertion of the royal supremacy. Whether this period—the period, be it remembered, of Richard III in England, of Louis XI in France, of the Medici and of Machiavelli in Florence, and of Alexander VI and the Borgias at Rome-whether this period really was, to a greater degree than its predecessors, characterized by subtle and unscrupulous political intrigue, or whether it is that the philosophical insight of Commynes has laid bare for us in detail as never before the secret springs of the political transactions of the time, it does at any rate seem to us as if there had been during this age a deepening in diplomacy, as if statesmen, instead of waiting upon and adapting themselves to the event, had shown a greater foresight in anticipating developments, and a shrewder skill, as well as a greater immunity from moral compunction, in planning beforehand the most intricate combinations to meet It is the masterly hand with which Commynes unrayels this web of diplomacy, with which he reveals to us the springs and wheels and pinions behind the face of the watch, that marks him out from his predecessors, and entitles him to the merit of the historian, rather than of the mere chronicler

Commynes, the first philosophic historian. For Froissart, the *trouvère* born out of his time, history is a gorgeous pageant. But Commynes was a statesman and a diplomat. For him history is a chess-board. Little concerned with the accidents of its external features, he busies himself with

analysing the moves of the game which he had himself helped to play, for the instruction and guidance of political chess-players of future times. Many of his shrewd observations have become the commonplaces of the political science of to-day the advantages of the English constitution, the principle of the European balance of power, the future aggrandisement of the German nation, still largely neutralized by its division into petty States.

The diplomacy of Commynes is distinctly Machia-Comvelian. The final touchstone of the rightness of mynes' a course of action is its success. He has, withal, interpre-a strong sense of the finger of God, the 'destiny that history. shapes our ends'. The divine sanction is bestowed by success, how questionable soever be the means whereby it is achieved. Failure and catastrophe are traceable to the withdrawal of the divine favour. forfeited by the overweening pride which deems itself able to stand alone. To his credit be it reported that his memoirs show no trace of private rancour, though the opportunity was excellent, and provocations had not been lacking. But he bears his enemies no malice—they had only played the game.

The style of Commynes, in spite of occasional The style bursts of eloquence, is often monotonous and stilted, of Comoften heavy and involved. He is shaping his in- mynes. strument to new uses, for which the past furnishes him with no model, since the great historians of classical antiquity are sealed books to him: whilst he is deprived of that support which meaner intellects have in more favoured times derived from the literary style of their contemporaries. For the fifteenth century was a trough between two waves, of which the crests lay, the one in the thirteenth century, declining through the fourteenth, and the other in the seventeenth, rising through the Renais-

sance.

PHILIPPE VAN DER CLYTE, SIRE DE COMMYNES (1443 ?-1511). was born at Renescure, in the present department of Nord. His education was neglected. He learnt neither Latin nor Greek but repaired this deficiency by copious reading in French, by the study of modern languages, and by his wide experience of men and of State affairs. In 1464 he was esquire to Philip the Good. Duke of Burgundy, who had been his godfather. and shortly afterwards he passed into the service of Philip's son, the Count of Charolais, afterwards Charles the Bold (le Téméraire). Duke of Burgundy. He was present at the Battle of Montlhery, where Charles fruitlessly opposed the entry of Louis XI into Paris. When Louis, in 1468, imprudently trusted himself into the hands of Charles at Péronne,2 it was largely owing to the part played by Commynes that this rash step cost him nothing worse than a humiliating treaty with his adversary. In 1470 a mission to England (his master was married to a sister of Edward IV) gave him an insight into the rôle of Parliament in the English Constitution, so unlike anything with which he was familiar at home. A mission to Spain in 1471 furnished the occasion for an interview with Louis, at which was concluded the bargain whereby Commynes transferred his services from Charles the Bold to King Louis himself, a betraval which had perhaps already been broached at Péronne. This desertion has been severely judged; it had at least the sanction of success, which was, as we have seen, Commynes' ultimate criterion of conduct. He enjoyed the confidence of his new master throughout the life of the latter, an achievement which was in itself no mean triumph of diplomacy, and repaid it with an absolute, though by no means a blind devotion. The death of his patron plunged him into a sea of difficulties, from which it needed all his skill in the conduct of ticklish affairs to extricate himself. Compromised in the plots of the Duke of Orléans against the regent, Anne of Beaujeu, he 'tasted' for eight months of the famous cages de

¹ This was the Duke of Burgundy who entered into alliance with our Henry V by the Treaty of Troyes (1420), who sold Joan of Arc to the English, and who occasionally flits across the stage in Shakespeare's *Henry VI*. It was he who ransomed Charles d'Orléans from the English (see p. 155) and married him to his niece.

² See extract, p. 138.

fer. 1 Thence he was transferred to the Conciergerie at Paris. where he spent the greater part of two years (1487-9) in the contemplation of the traffic on the Seine. Recalled to Court in 1490 through the influence of the Duke of Orléans, he negotiated the marriage of Charles VIII with Anne of Brittany, whereby this duchy was reunited with the Crown of France. When the young king, Charles VIII, resolved upon his expedition into Italy (1494). which had for its object the conquest of Naples, Commynes, though himself opposed to the expedition, was sent to Venice, to prevent the conclusion of a league of the Italian States against Charles. The mission failed, and Naples was won and lost again. The death of Charles VIII in 1498 put an end to his political career. He spent the rest of his life in retirement, consumed by the restlessness of the statesman reduced from the position of a foremost actor on the stage of politics to that of a mere spectator. Yet he carried through one other interesting piece of domestic diplomacy, the marriage of his daughter to René, Comte de Penthièvre, whereby the latter rid himself of the load of debt he had incurred towards the father of his bride. and Commynes himself, all unforeseeing, became a forefather of kings of France, of Spain, and of Portugal.

THE MEMOIRS OF PHILIPPE DE COMMYNES

The sinister figure of Louis XI has been painted in vivid characters for English readers in Sir Walter Scott's *Quentin Durward*. The memoirs of Philippe de Commynes are the chief historical source drawn upon for that romance, and the following extracts have been chosen with especial reference thereto.

Louis XI reigned from 1461 to 1483. He broke the power of the overgrown feudal nobles, and thus paved the way for the autocracy of Louis XIV. His most formidable adversary was Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, the leader of the so-called 'League of the Public Weal', directed by the nobility against the king. To the fiery valour and ungovernable temper of Charles, Louis opposed a subtle and unscrupulous diplomacy and a cold and calculating self-command, and the victory fell to the less generous but more intellectual of the rivals.

¹ See extract, p. 140.

Louis a Prisoner in the Castle of Péronne.

(Cf. Quentin Durward, chap. xxvi to the end.)

Louis, having detached the Duke of Brittany from the coalition against him, instead of making war on the Duke of Burgundy, boldly threw himself on his loyalty, and visited him with a small retinue in the Duke's castle of Péronne, trusting in the Duke's chivalry for his safety, and hoping by his intellectual superiority to overreach him in negotiation, and gain all the advantages of a victory without the risk of a battle. The conference opened under fair auspices. But Louis had previously sent agents to Liège, a city which owed allegiance to the Duke, to foment disturbances, and, most disastrously for his schemes, the Liégeois rose in insurrection prematurely whilst he was still the guest of Charles. Exaggerated rumours of the excesses of the insurgents—already bad enough in themselves—reached the ears of Charles, who flew into a towering rage and promptly made a prisoner of the King.

Et [ledict duc] entra en une grant colere, disant que le Roy estoit venu là pour le tromper : et soubdainement envoya fermer les portes de la ville et du chasteau, et feit semer une assez mauvaise raison : c'estoit que on le faisoit pour une boeste (boîte) qui estoit perdue, où il y avoit de bonnes bagues et de l'argent. Le Roy qui se veit enfermé en ce chasteau (qui est petit) et force archiers à la porte, n'estoit point sans doubte : et se veoit logié rasibus (à côté) d'une grosse tour, où un comte de Vermandois feit mourir ung sien predecesseur roy de France.¹ Pour lors estoye (j'étais) encores avec ledict duc, et le servoye de chambellan, et couchoye en sa chambre quant je vouloye : car tel estoit l'usance de ceste maison.

Ledict duc, comme il veit les portes fermees, feit saillir les gens de sa chambre, et dict à aucuns que nous estions, que le Roy estoit venu là pour le trahir, et

¹ Charles the Simple, died 929.

qu'il avoit dissimulé ladicte venue de toute sa puissance, et qu'elle s'estoit faicte contre son vouloir: et va compter ces nouvelles du Liege, et comme le Roy l'1 avoit faict conduire par ses ambassadeurs, et comme tous ces gens avoient esté tuez: et estoit terriblement esmeu contre le Roy, et le menassoit fort: et croy veritablement que, si à ceste heure là il eust trouvé ceulx à qui il s'adressoit, prestz à le conforter ou conseiller de faire au Roy une mauvaise compaignie, il eust esté ainsi faict: et pour le moins eust esté mis en ceste grosse tour...

Nous ne aigrismes riens, mais adoulcismes à nostre povoir...

Ces portes ainsi fermees, et ces gardes qui y estoient commis, dura deux ou trois jours: et ce pendant ledict duc de Bourgongne ne veit point le Roy, ny n'entroit des gens du Roy au chasteau, que peu, et par le guichet de la porte. Nulz des gens dudict seigneur ne furent ostez d'aupres de luy; mais peu, ou nulz de ceulx du duc alloient parler à luy, ne en sa chambre, au moins de ceulx qui avoient aucune auctorité avec luy. Le premier jour ce fut tout effroy et murmure par la ville. Le second jour ledict duc fut ung peu resfroidy: il tint conseil la pluspart du jour, et partie de la nuict.

Meanwhile the King did all he could by bribes and promises to make interest for himself with the Duke's counsellors. Of these the major part recommended that the safe conduct which had been granted to the King should be honoured, but there were not wanting some whose advice tended in the opposite direction.

Ceste nuict, qui fut la tierce, ledict duc ne se despouilla oncques : seullement se coucha par deux ou trois fois

¹ sc. the insurrection.

sur son liet, et puis se pourmenoit (promenait): car telle estoit sa facon, quant il estoit troublé. Je couchay ceste nuict en sa chambre, et me pourmenay avec luy par plusieurs fois. Sur le matin, se trouva en plus grant colere que jamais, en usant de menasses, et prest à executer grant chose: toutesfois il se reduysit que si le Roy juroit la paix, et vouloit aller avec luy au Liege, pour luy ayder à venger monseigneur du Liege,¹ qui estoit son proche parent, il se contenteroit.

Louis accordingly eats his leek with the best countenance he can. At a later date it came to open war between them, in which Charles had at first the best of it, but finally after serious reverses fell by an unknown hand in the Battle of Nancy (1477).

Of the Prisons contrived by Louis XI for others.

Il est vray qu'il avoit faict de rigoureuses prisons, comme caiges de fer, et d'aultres de boys, couvertes de plaques de fer par le dehors et par le dedans, avec terribles ferrures, de quelque huict pieds de large, et de la haulteur d'ung homme, et ung pied plus. Le premier qui les devisa fut l'evesque de Verdun, qui en la premiere qui fut faicte fut mis incontinent et y a couché quatorze ans. Plusieurs depuis l'ont mauldit, et moy aussi, qui en ay tasté, soubz le Roy de present, huict mois.

How Louis shut himself up in Prison.

Or cecy n'est pas de nostre matiere principalle, mais fault revenir à dire comme de son temps furent trouvees ces mauvaises et diverses prisons, et comme, avant mourir, il se trouva en semblables et plus grandes, et aussi grant paour (peur) et plus grande que ceulx qu'il y avoit tenuz : laquelle chose je tiens à très grant grace pour luy, et pour partie de son purgatoire; et le

 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ The Bishop of Liège, who was falsely reported murdered by the insurgents.

dis ainsi pour monstrer qu'il n'est nul homme, de quelque dignité qu'il soit, qui ne souffre, ou en secret ou en public, et par espécial ceulx qui font souffrir les aultres. Ledict seigneur, vers la fin de ses jours, feit clorre, tout à l'entour de sa maison du Plessis lez Tours. de gros barreaulx de fer, en forme de grosses grilles ; et aux quatre coings de la maison, quatre movneaulx de fer. bons, grans et espes. Lesdictes grilles estoient contre le mur, du costé de la place, de l'aultre part du fossé (car il estoit à fons de cuve), et v feit mettre plusieurs broches de fer, massonnees dedans le mur. qui avoient chascune trois ou quatre poinctes, et les feit mettre fort pres l'une de l'aultre. Et davantaige ordonna dix arbalestriers dedans lesdicts fossez, pour tirer à ceulx qui en approucheroient avant que la porte fust ouverte: et entendoit qu'ilz couchassent ausdictz fossez, et se retirassent ausdictz movneaulx de fer. Et il entendoit bien que ceste fortification ne suffisoit point contre grant nombre de gens, ne contre une armee; mais de cela il n'avoit point paour, mais craignoit que quelque seigneur, ou plusieurs, ne feissent une entreprinse de prendre la place, demy par amour et demy par force, avec quelque peu d'intelligence, et que ceulx là prinssent l'auctorité et le feissent vivre comme homme sans sens, et indigne de gouverner.

La porte du Plessis ne se ouvroit qu'il ne fust huict heures du matin, et ne baissoit le pont jusques à ladicte heure, et lors y entroient les officiers : et les cappitaines des gardes mettoient les portiers ordinaires, et puis

¹ Thus described by Scott, Quentin Durward, chap. iii: 'Upon the walls were constructed certain cradles of iron, called swallows' nests, from which the sentinels, who were regularly posted there, could, without being exposed to any risk, take deliberate aim at any who should attempt to enter without the proper signal or password of the day.'

ordonnoient leur guet d'archiers, tant à la porte que parmy la court, comme en une place de frontiere estroictement gardee: et nul n'y entroit que par le guichet et que ce ne fust du sceu (su) du Roy, excepté quelque maistre d'hostel et gens de ceste sorte, qui n'alloient point devers luy. Est il donc possible de tenir ung roy, pour le garder plus honnestement, en plus estroicte prison que luy mesmes se tenoit? Les caiges où il avoit tenu les aultres avoient quelques huict pieds en carré; et luy, qui estoit si grant roy, avoit une bien petite court de chasteau à se proumener : encores n'y venoit il gueres, mais se tenoit en la gallerie, sans partir de là, sinon que par les chambres alloit à la messe, sans passer par ladicte court. Vouldroit l'on dire que ce Roy ne souffrist pas aussi bien que les aultres, qui ainsi s'enfermoit et se faisoit garder, qui estoit ainsi en paour de ses enfans et de tous ses prouchains parens, qui changeoit et muoit de jour en jour ses serviteurs et nourriz (commensaux), et qui ne tenoient bien ne honneur que de luy, et en nul d'eulx ne se osoit fier, et s'enchainoit ainsi de si estrange chaine et clostures? Si le lieu estoit plus grant que d'une prison commune, aussi estoit il plus grant que prisonniers communs.

CHAPTER VIII

FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURY LYRIC

As in the case of the Chansons de Geste, so also in Decathe case of lyric poetry the fourteenth century is dence of a century of decadence. Great lords and ladies no poetry. longer beguile their leisure with the rhyming of The lyric poetry is chiefly characterized by the decay of imagination and the increasing complication of metrical form. This tendency finds Metrical expression in the elaboration of poetical forms whose complicacomposition is governed by fixed rules, which tions. prescribe the number and length of the stanzas, the order of the recurrence of the rhymes, and the repetition of certain lines at set intervals in the form of a refrain. Of this class were the Chant royal, the Ballade, the Triolet, and the Virelai. These forms were revived in France during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and spread thence to England. They are not without a certain stately or dainty charm. Within limits the imposition of such artificial shackles is not inconsistent with, and may even favour, poetic excellence, as witness the sonnet. But, if the shackles continue to be accumulated, a point is soon reached where no genius can wear them and still pursue its way to a set goal of thought. The art of composition becomes a sort of putting together of Chinese puzzles with words for pieces, and the resulting poem is worth no more than such a puzzle when finally fitted together. That was the fate which this metrical mania, running riot in the most extravagant combinations

Some notable talents

and complications of subtleties and refinements, prepared for much of the fourteenth-century poetry. In spite of this blight, however, the age yet produced some notable talents, amongst which may be enumerated Guillaume de Machaut, Eustache Deschamps, Christine de Pisan, and Froissart, the last still greater in another field.

The night val Literatures

Charles d'Orléans and Francois Villon.

The fifteenth century is the night of mediaeval of Mediae-literature, which expires amidst the throes of civil strife and of the Hundred Years' War. In lyric poetry it continues and perfects the poems with fixed forms bequeathed to it by the fourteenth, but without any fresh breath of universal inspiration. Yet some few individual writers strike a new note, chief amongst whom are Charles d'Orléans and François Villon. It would be difficult to imagine a more striking contrast than that offered by these two poets, the one a prince and the father of kings. the other a vagabond, a thief, and a murderer. In their own individual persons they sum up the two contrasting currents which we have seen running side by side throughout mediaeval literature. Charles d'Orléans is the last of the long line of the courtly trouvères, poets of fancy to whom the lyre was a gilded toy to charm away an idle hour, of the lineage of Chrestien de Troves and of Guillaume de Lorris; Villon continues the realistic, bourgeois tradition of the fabliaux, of the Romaunt of Reynard, and of Jean de Meun, whose inspiration, so far from being divorced from life, does not even shrink from the mire of life. Charles d'Orléans, come of a race of virtuosi, makes of a poem a piece of curiouslywrought goldsmith's work, a consummation to which indeed the nice workmanship exacted by the poems of fixed form naturally tended,1 and found in his

¹ Cf. Swinburne:

^{&#}x27;A Roundel is wrought as a ring or a starbright sphere . . . Its jewel of music is carven of all or of aught.'

apprenticeship to this craft of literary artificer that secret of style which is what we most miss in mediaeval poetry; Villon brought the matter of poetry back to reality, from which it is apt to stray too far, and drew from his own wasted life poignant accents of grief which find an echo in all hearts that are clothed in the frail flesh of humanity. The one is the first stylist, and tends by excess to fall into preciosity; the other is the first realist, and in him realism is hardly saved from its own extreme, which is pessimism, by the faith which remained living in him throughout all the soilures of his sordid life. The writings of Charles d'Orléans were without influence on the course of French literature, having by some strange chance remained buried in oblivion till near the middle of the eighteenth century. Probably his influence would in any case have been slight. He belonged to the past, and stands for perfection in an all but extinct tradition. Villon belongs to the future: he broke with the artificiality and the all-pervading allegory of mediaeval literature, and refreshed the language of poetry by plunging it again into the living well of the popular speech. He was the ancestor of such characteristically French geniuses as Rabelais, La Fontaine, and Voltaire. Unjust and ignorant as Boileau proved himself in his summary verdict upon the predecessors of Villon, he was not far wrong in his selection of Villon himself as standing on the threshold of modern French literature:

'Villon sut le premier, dans ces siècles grossiers, Débrouiller l'art confus de nos vieux romanciers.' Art poétique.

One word may here be said about the laws of Poems of construction which governed the poems of fixed fixed form, of which the ballade and the rondeau may be form. taken as types, the former, in particular, occupying

The Ballade.

until the Renaissance the predominant position from which it was thereafter dethroned by the sonnet, whose reign has lasted till the present day. The ballade, which must by no means be confused with the English ballad, consisted of three stanzas, of equal measure and repeating the same rhymes, all three terminated by the same line repeated in the form of a refrain, the poem being closed by a halfstanza, constructed on the same rhythmical model as the preceding stanzas, and terminating with the same refrain, which half-stanza was known as the envoi, because in it it was the custom of the poet to apostrophize directly the person, generally a prince, to whom the ballade was presumed to be addressed. The length of the lines, as well as the number of them that went to the stanza, varied according to the whim of the poet. The stanza most commonly contained eight or ten lines, and the line seven, eight, or ten syllables. The eightline ballade admitted only three rhymes, and the rhyme-sequence was A,B,A,B,B,C,B,C for each of the three stanzas, and B.C.B.C for the envoi. (Cf. the ballades given in the text.)

The Rondeau.

The rondeau simple, known later as triolet, consisted of eight lines on two rhymes, the first line being repeated after each pair of lines, and the second at the end. The rhyme-sequence was thus A,B,A,A,A,B,A,B. (Cf. the Rondeau of Guillaume de

Machaut, p. 147.)

A later form of the rondeau (cf. the rondeaux of Charles d'Orléans, p. 158 et seq.) consisted of fourteen lines on two rhymes, the first two lines being repeated for the seventh and eighth and also for the final couplet.

GUILLAUME DE MACHAUT (1290?-1380) was for thirty years secretary to Jean de Luxembourg, son of the Emperor Henry VII and King of Bohemia, a warlike prince, the hero of a score of battles. Guillaume accompanied his royal master on campaigns in Poland and Russia. The latter was slain at the battle of Crécy (1346); being then blind, he had caused two of his knights to take his horse on either side and lead him into the thick of the fight, where he might 'strike one blow with his sword'. After the death of his patron Guillaume enjoyed the protection of his daughter, who had married the Duke of Normandy, afterwards John II of France, and upon her death a few years later John himself provided for him. When John was taken prisoner at Poitiers, Guillaume retired to Rheims. Guillaume contributed largely to the establishment of the vogue of the poems with fixed forms. He enjoyed during his lifetime a great reputation, which died with him. The fame of his poems would seem to have benefited by his really original talent as a musician.

RONDEAU

Blanche com lys, plus que rose vermeille, Resplendissant com rubis d'oriant, En remirant ¹ vo biauté non pareille, Blanche com lys, plus que rose vermeille, Suy si ravis que mes cuers toudis ² veille Afin que serve, à loy de fin amant, Blanche com lys, plus que rose vermeille, Resplendissant com rubis d'oriant.

Eustache Deschamps (1328–1415?) was a disciple of Guillaume de Machaut, and like him was a native of Champagne. Like him, too, he led a wandering life amidst dangers and discomforts in the service of the great, wrote voluminously, and lived to a ripe old age. He was king's messenger, usher-at-arms, esquire to the Dauphin, bailiff of Valois, castellan of Fismes, maître des eaux et forêts, and général des finances. Soon after the death of his patron, Charles V, the English invaders burnt his native town, and with it a house belonging to our poet. This he never forgave them, and in a score of ballads he demands that an army should go and burn the English in their own homes. It is all the more interesting to find him addressing to Chaucer,

¹ contemplant. ² toujours.

together with a copy of his own works, a ballade, in which he is unstinting of his praise, with the refrain (referring to Chaucer's translation of the Romaunt of the Rose), 'Grand translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier'. The last years of Deschamps were spent at Court, against which he railed continually, but without being able to tear himself away from it. He wrote rondeaux by the score and ballades by the hundred: a long satirical poem. Le Miroir de mariage, directed against women: fables, letters, and an Art of Poetry in prose. His love poems are conventional and cold. He was a bad lover: he early quarrelled with and parted from his wife, and he grudged the money he had spent on his children. But he was a good hater, as his inveterate rancour against the English showed, and it is as a satirist, of prelates, financiers, soldiers—and, above all, women—that he shows himself most gifted. His historical poems, though prosaic in style. are of value especially for the light they throw on the events of the time, which he had unusual opportunities of observing.

THE GOLDEN MEAN 1

BALLADE

(Build thy house neither high on the mountain nor low in the plain. The honour of the high place is apt to be cast down by the wind of Envy. Yet poverty is a reproach, and has no aid of men. Build on a little rock, neither high nor low. The middle estate is blest of God.)

Ou ² hault sommet de la haulte montaigne Ne fait pas bon maison edifier,³ Que li grant vens ne la gaste et souspraingne ⁴; Ne ou ² bas lieu ne la doit pas lier ⁵; Car par eaues pourroit amolier Le fondement et perir le merrien; ⁶

¹ The text given is reproduced from the edition of the works of Eustache Deschamps published by the 'Société des Anciens Textes français', by the kind permission of M. Sudre, the Administrator of the Society.

² au. ³ Il ne fait pas bon construire sa maison.

⁴ surprenne. 5 on ne doit pas attacher.

⁶ Le fondement pourrait être amolli et le bois pourri par les eaux.

Nulz ne se doit ne hault ne bas fier: 1 Benoist 2 de Dieu est qui tient le moien.

Es grans estaz est haulte honeur mondaine Qu'Envie tend par son vent trebuchier: Et la s'endort chascuns en gloire vaine, Mais en ce cas chiet honeur de legier 3: Du hault en bas le convient abaissier. Et lors languist quant il dechiet 4 du sien : Telz haulz estas sont de foible mortier : Benoist de Dieu est qui tient le moien.

Ou 5 lieu trop bas qui est assis en plaine Ne se doit nulz tenir pour mendier. Car povreté est reprouche certaine, Et si n'est homs qui vueille au povre aidier; Fay ta maison en un petit rochier Ne hault ne bas, et la vivras tu bien : En tous estas vueil 6 dire et enseignier : Benoist de Dieu est qui tient le moien.

CHRISTINE DE PISAN (1363-?) was born at Venice, where her father was astrologer and doctor to the Republic. At the age of five she joined him at Paris, whither he had been invited by Charles V. Married at fifteen, she was widowed at twenty-five, and never ceased to mourn her husband. The death of her father's royal patron had reduced him from opulence to penury, so that Christine was ultimately left with her mother and three little children looking to her for support. She shouldered her responsibilities bravely. Her early ballades, written to solace her grief at the loss of her husband, having found an appreciative audience, she turned to her pen for a livelihood, and wrote voluminously, having her writings copied, and selling them directly to such as were able and willing to buy them. We may

¹ Nul ne doit se fier ni à haut ni à bas.

honneur tombe légèrement.

be légèrement.

be légèrement.

compare de légèrement. 4 déchoit, tombe.

accordingly say that she invented, rather than adopted, the profession of man of letters.

Her shorter poems, though the inspiration is slight, are often graceful, and, when they spring from her personal emotion, natural and touching. She further wrote in verse the Chemin de longue estude, in which she debates the question whether nobility. valour, wealth, or wisdom is best qualified to govern the world: the Mutacion de fortune, a sort of universal history, and the Roman d'Othéa et d'Hector, a moral treatise dedicated to the voung Duke of Orléans. She is more eloquent in her prose-works, the most notable of which is the Livre des fais et bonnes mœurs du sage rou Charles V. To her own sex she addresses the Cité des Dames, a sort of Legend of Good Women, and the Livre des trois vertus. a treatise on the duties of women. She waged a polemic against the Roman de la Rose and its slanders upon women (see p. 104). slanders of which her own brave and gracious womanhood was itself the most convincing refutation. The date of her death is unknown, but she lived to see the triumph of Joan of Arc, and to celebrate it not unworthily in song.

CHRISTINE BEWAILS HER WIDOWHOOD

BALLADE

Seulete suis et seulete vueil 1 estre. Seulete m'a mon doulz ami 2 laissee; Seulete suis senz compaignon ne maistre, Seulete suis dolente et courroucee 3. Seulete suis en langour mesaisee 4, Seulete suis plus que nulle 5 esgaree. Seulete suis senz ami demouree.

Seulete suis a huiz 6 ou a fenestre. Seulete suis en un anglet 7 muree 8;

¹ je veux.

² Not 'friend' but 'love', as often in Modern French. 4 mal à l'aise. 5 quelqu'une.

⁶ porte (Lat. ostium). Cf. à huis clos, huissier.

⁷ petit angle, coin.

⁸ enfermée.

Seulete suis pour moy 1 de pleurs repaistre. Seulete suis doulente ou appaisiee. Seulete suis, riens n'est qui tant me siee², Seulete suis en ma chambre enserree 3. Sculete suis senz ami demouree

Seulete suis par tout et en tout estre.4 Seulete suis ou je voise ou je siee 5; Seulete suis plus qu'autre rien 6 terrestre. Seulete suis de chascun delaissee. Sculete suis durement abaissee. Seulete suis souvent toute esplouree. Sculete suis senz ami demource.

Princes.7 or est ma douleur commenciee: Seulete suis de tout deuil menacee. Seulete suis, plus tainte que moree.8 Sculete suis senz ami demource.

FROISSART

In conjunction with the following Ballade of the Marquerite should of right be read another dainty poem of Froissart, Le Dittié de la flour de la marquerite, which however is too long to be quoted here. Together the poems, which show the influence of the Romaunt of the Rose, give us a glimpse into the love romance, real or feigned, of Froissart's life.9 His choice of a favourite flower was dictated by the name of a young lady of noble birth whom the poet loved, or feigned himself to have loved hopelessly for ten years, and whose marriage at the end of that time is thought by some to have sent him on his travels in the hope of

¹ me, to be taken with repaistre.

² Third pers. sing. pres. subj. of seoir. Here means 'beseems'; in 1. 2 of the following stanza means 'sit'.

3 enfermée.

4 état (être used as a subst.)

5 soit que j'aille, soit que je reste assise.

6 chose (Lat. res).

⁷ nom., or rather voc. singular.

⁶ plus teinte qu'une mûre. Villon has practically the same expression, plus noir que meure, in a similar context. ⁹ For the biographical sketch of Froissart, see p. 128.

forgetting her. The 'Ditty of the Marguerite' may be thus briefly summarized. It is his duty, the poet declares, to praise and honour the flower of flowers. It is so fair to look upon that he can never have his fill of looking. It is small, white and crimson, and dwells in all green places, in the hermit's courtvard as in the fair gardens of Egypt. Blest be the hour when he chose for himself such a floweret, the queen of goodness and beauty, and indeed he awaits his guerdon therefor, if traitress Fortune wrong him not. The flower grows in such a place where neither cold nor heat, rain, hail nor wind, can check its growth, nor is there any planet in the firmament but is ready at its command. From sunrise to sunset it bends towards the sun which is by nature its chamber and its curtain, defending it against all mists, and making to flourish its hues of white and red. Without seed and without sower did it appear on earth, for Jupiter in pity made it spring from the tears shed by a lovelorn maiden on the grave where her love lay buried. Might the poet but have such fortune as Mercury, who first found the flower when leading his flock afield. and marvelled, for in January, when all the flowers are dead, this flower blossomed white and red, and Mercury wove it into a chaplet, and sent it to his love, who hitherto had not deigned to look upon him: and she for guerdon sent back the message that never a day should be love without requital: whereby the flower had such dainty virtue that for him who was despised before it won the love he craved

BALLADE OF THE MARGUERITE

Sus toutes flours tient-on la rose à ² belle, Et en après, je croi, la violette; La flour de lys est belle, et la perselle ³; La flour de glay ⁴ est plaisans et parfette:

¹ Cf. Chaucer, Legend of Good Women: 'The dayesye, or elles the ye of day, The emperice and flour of floures alle.' The whole of Chaucer's eulogy of the daisy in the prologue to this poem bears a striking resemblance to the poem of Froissart, which can scarcely be the result of chance. These two votaries of the daisy must often have met, Chaucer having been a page in the household of the Duke of Clarence, son of Queen Philippa, to whose household Froissart was attached for several years.

³ pour.

³ pour.

⁴ glaïeul.

Et li pluisour ¹ aiment moult l'anquelie ². Le pyonier ³, le muget, la soussie ⁴, Cascune flour a par li sa merite, Mès je vous di, tant que pour ma partie ⁵: Sus toutes flours j'aime la margherite.

Car en tous temps, plueve, gresille ou gelle,⁶ Soit la saisons ou fresce, ou laide, ou nette, Ceste flour est gracieuse et nouvelle, Douce et plaisans, blancete et vermillete; Close est a point, ouverte et espanie; Jà ⁷ n'y sera morte ne apalie ⁸; Toute bonté est dedens li escripte; Et pour un tant ⁹, quant bien y estudie, Sus toutes flours j'aime la margherite.

Mès trop grant doel me croist et renouvelle, Quant me souvient de la douce flourette; Car enclose est dedens une tourelle: S'a une haie audevant de li faitte ¹⁰, Qui nuit et jour m'empèce et contrarie. Mès s'amours voelt estre de mon aye ¹¹, Ja pour creniel ¹², pour tour, ne pour garite ¹³, Je ne lairai qu'a occoison ne die ¹⁴: Sus toutes flours j'aime la margherite. ¹⁵

⁵ quant à moi.

¹ la plupart. ² ancolie.

<sup>pivoine.
qu'il pleuve, qu'il grêle ou qu'il gèle.
jamais.
pâlie.</sup>

pâlie. 9 pour cela.

Et il y a une haie faite devant elle.

de mon aide.
 créneau.
 Je ne cesserai de dire à l'occasion.

¹⁵ The ballades of Froissart, as was usual in the fourteenth century, have no envoi.

VIRELAT

On dist que j'ai bien maniere ¹ D'ietre orgillousette,² Bien afiert ³ à estre fiere Jone ⁴ pucelette.

Hui ⁵ matin me levai Droit à l'ajournée ⁶, En un jardinet ⁷ entrai Dessus la rousée:

Je cuidai ⁸ estre premiere Ou ⁹ clos sur l'erbette, Mès mon doule ami y ere ¹⁰ Coeillans ¹¹ la flourette.

On dist, etc.

Un chapelet ¹² li donnai Fet de la vesprée ¹³; Il le prist, bon gré l'en sçai; Puis m'a appellée:

'Voelliés oïr 14 ma proyere,

'Très belle et doucette.

'Un petit plus que n'affiere

'Vous m'estes durette.'

On dist, etc.

¹ bonne grâce.

² The dim. suffix can be added to adjectives, cf. doucette and durette below.

il sied bien.

4 jeune.

5 aujourd'hui (Lat. hodie).

6 au point du jour.

7 petit jardin.

8 crus.

9 en le. 10 était (Lat. erat). 11 cueillant. 12 couronne de fieurs (Eng. chaplet). 13 la veille.

14 veuillez entendre.

CHARLES D'ORLÉANS (1391-1465) was the eldest son of the Duke of Orléans, brother of Charles VI, and of Valentine de Milan, a daughter of the illustrious Visconti family, 'the most beautiful, the most chaste, and the most charming woman of her From both parents he inherited the love of letters and of art. His life falls into three periods of almost exactly equal length. The first twenty-five years were spent amidst the anarchy of the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453), in the thick of violence and intrigues most uncongenial to his gentle and dreamy nature. He was educated in the castle of Blois, in the midst of artistic luxury, and surrounded by artists and men of letters whom his father gathered around him. At the age of fifteen years he married his cousin. Isabella of France, the widow of Richard II of England. In the following year his father was murdered at the instigation of John the Fearless. Duke of Burgundy, who was his rival for the supreme authority during the insanity of the King. A year later his mother died heart-broken. followed in a few months by his wife. During the seven following years we see him in continual strife with the Burgundian faction, fortifying cities, levving troops, making leagues and signing transient truces. At the Battle of Agincourt (1415), where he was joint commander-in-chief, he was taken prisoner, and spent the next twenty-five years of his life in harsh captivity in England. Most of his poems were written to charm the weariness of this enforced leisure. It is characteristic of his nature that the tragic events of his life find scarcely any echo in his poetry. In it he sought oblivion, not the renewal of old griefs. Transient love affairs, treated ideally, and so vaguely tinged with passion as to suggest that his loves themselves are but vaporous fictions of the imagination; delicately graceful portravals of that nature which appeared to him in colours all the more brilliant because it was seen from behind the bars of a prison; languorous yearnings for the fatherland from which he is exiled and for the peace which will reunite him with it: these are the subjects which he treats in his poems, slender trifles fragilely beautiful like some filigree of gold, and daintily interwoven with the popular allegory of the day. Finally liberated in 1440, he lived yet another twenty-five years, which closed as with a tranquil Indian summer his troubled career. They were spent in his little Court of Blois, which

became as a magnet to attract writers, minstrels, and artists. Here in this the last representative of the many princely eastles in which the poetry of chivalry had been at home, the Duke spent his last years in a round of innocent, artistic, and intellectual pleasures, and here he presided over, and at times deigned to take part in, the bloodless strife of literary tournaments which revived for a time the glories of the old trouvère days. It is worthy of note that the library there collected by Charles was one of the richest of its time in Europe and became ultimately the nucleus of the present Bibliothèque nationale. His last days were darkened by the harshness of Louis XI, and gladdened by the birth of a little son who was destined, as Louis XII, to receive, and that deservedly, the noble title of 'father of his people'.

BALLADE

WRITTEN DURING HIS CAPTIVITY IN ENGLAND

En regardant vers le pais de France, Ung jour m'avint, a Dovre sur la mer, Qu'il me souvint de la doulce plaisance Que souloye ¹ ou ² dit pais trouver. Si ³ commençay de cueur a souspirer, Combien ⁴ certes que grant bien me faisoit, De veoir France que mon cueur amer ⁵ doit.

Je m'avisay que c'estoit nonsçavance ⁶
De telz souspirs dedens mon cueur garder;
Veu que je voy que la voye commence ⁷
De bonne paix qui tous biens peut donner.
Pour ce tournay en confort ⁸ mon penser:
Mais non pourtant mon cueur ne se lassoit
De veoir France que mon cueur amer doit.

8 consolation.

¹ J'avais coutume (Lat. solebam). ² en le. ³ ainsi ⁴ combien...que, quoique. ⁵ aimer. ⁶ folie, manque de sens.

⁷ Qu'on est en voie de conclure une bonne paix.

Alors chargeay en la nef d'esperance Tous mes souhaitz, en les priant d'aler Oultre la mer, sans faire demourance ¹, Et a France de me recommander. Or nous doint ² Dieu bonne paix sans tarder: Adonc ³ auray loisir, mais qu'ainsi soit,⁴ De veoir France que mon cueur amer doit.

Paix est tresor qu'on ne peut trop louer: Je hé ⁵ guerre, point ne la doy priser: Destourbé ⁶ m'a long temps, soit tort ou droit, De veoir France que mon cueur amer doit.

L'HOMME ÉGARÉ QUI NE SAIT OÙ IL VA

BALLADE

En la forest d'ennuyeuse Tristesse Un jour m'avint qu'a par moy cheminoye; Si rencontray l'amoureuse deesse ⁷ Qui m'appella, demandant ou j'aloye. Je respondy que par fortune estoye Mis en exil en ce bois, long temps a,⁸ Et qu'a bon droit appeller me povoye L'omme esgaré qui ne scet ou il va.

En sousriant par sa tres grant ⁹ humblesse Me respondy, 'amy, se je sçavoye 'Pourquoy tu es mis en ceste destresse, 'A mon povoir voulentiers t'aideroye,

délai. ² Subjunctive of *doner*: 'Que Dieu nous donne.' alors. ⁴ pourvu qu'il en soit ainsi.

⁵ hais. ⁶ empêché. ⁷ la déesse de l'amour.

<sup>il y a longtemps, depuis longtemps.
As Lat. grandis was both masc. and fem., so in Old French grant and the like have no distinctive feminine form. Cf. p. 158, l. 16.</sup>

'Car ja ¹ pieça ² je mis ton cueur en voye 'De tout plaisir, ne sçay qui l'en osta. 'Or me desplaist qu'a present je te voye 'L'omme esgaré qui ne scet ou il va.'

Helas, dis je, souverainne princesse,
Mon fait ³ sçavez: pour quoy le vous diroye?
C'est par la mort qui fait a tous rudesse,
Qui m'a tollu ⁴ celle que tant amoye,
En qui estoit tout l'espoir que j'avoye,
Qui me guidoit, si bien m'acompaigna
En son vivant, que point ne me trouvoye
L'omme esgaré qui ne scet ou il va.

Aveugle suy, ne sçay ou aler doye:
De mon baston, affin que ne forvoye,
Je vais tastant mon chemin ça et la.
C'est grant pitié qu'il convient que je soye
L'omme esgaré qui ne scet ou il va.

SPRING

RONDEAU

Le temps a laissié son manteau
De vent, de froidure et de pluye,
Et s'est vestu de broderye
De soleil raiant, cler et beau.
Il n'y a beste ne oiseau
Que ⁵ en son jargon ne chante ou crye:
Le temps a laissié son manteau
De vent, de froidure et de pluye.
Riviere, fontaine et ruisseau
Portent en livree jolye

¹ maintenant (Lat. jam). ² i.e. il y a pièce, il y a longtemps. ³ affaire. ⁴ enlevé (Lat. tollere). ⁵ Qui

Goultes d'argent d'orfaverie 1: Chascun s'abille de nouveau. Le temps a laissié son manteau De vent, de froidure et de pluve.

STIMMER.

RONDEAU

Les fourriers 2 d'Esté sont venuz Pour appareiller son logis. Et ont fait tendre ses tappis De fleurs et verdure tissuz 3. En estandant tappis veluz De vert 4 herbe par le païs. Les fourriers d'Esté sont venuz Pour appareiller son logis. Cueurs, d'ennuy pieça 5 morfonduz. Dieu mercy, sont sains et jolis,6 Alez-vous-en, prenez païs.7 Yver, vous ne demourez plus: Les fourriers d'Esté sont venuz.

THE SLUGGARD'S MAYING

Quant j'ai ouv 8 le tabourin Sonner, pour s'en aler au may.9 En mon lit n'en av fait effray.10 Ne levé mon chief 11 du coissin 12;

² harbingers, lit. quarter-masters. Summer advances like a triumphant army, sending messengers before her to prepare for her ³ i.e. tissus de fleurs et de verdure. reception.

⁴ Cf. note 9, p. 157. ⁵ depuis longtemps.

⁶ joyeux, as still in Eng. jolly.
⁸ entendu.
⁹ a-Maying.

¹⁰ je ne me suis pas laissé effrayer. 11 tête. 12 coussin, oreiller.

En disant: il est trop matin, Ung peu je me rendormiray. Quant j'ai ouy le tabourin Sonner pour s'en aler au may, Jeunes gens partent ¹ leur butin; De Nonchaloir m'accointeray.² A lui je m'abutineray.³ Trouvé l'ay plus prouchain voisin, Quant j'ay ouy le tabourin.

SHE IS A BONNY WEE THING

CHANSON

Dieu, qu'il la fait bon regarder, La gracieuse bonne et belle ⁴; Pour les grans biens qui sont en elle, Chascun est prest de la louer.

Qui se pourroit d'elle lasser! Tous jours sa beauté renouvelle. Dieu, qu'il la fait bon regarder, La gracieuse bonne et belle!

Par deçà, ne de là, la mer, Ne sçay dame, ne damoiselle Qui soit en tous biens parfais telle; C'est ung songe que d'i penser. Dieu, qu'il la fait bon regarder!

Lit. I'll make a friend of don't care

3 Avec lui je butinerai.

¹ partagent, subj. 'Que les jeunes gens partagent'.

² Lit. I'll make a friend of 'don't care'.

⁴ bonne et belle, virtually a noun, Mid. Eng. bonnibell.

Francois Villon (1431-?) was born at Paris, of poor and obscure parents. The name of Villon which he has made immortal was not his by right of birth: the fixed surname of our days had not yet emerged from the floating nickname, and Villon was merely one of many sobriquets by which our Francois chose at different times to be known, possibly, but not necessarily. as disguises under which he might dissimulate his too well-known personality. This particular name he borrowed from one Guillaume de Villon, a priest who interested himself in him as a child and enabled him to pursue his studies at the University of Paris. There he climbed all the rungs of the academic ladder as far as Master of Arts, and then, as it would seem, yielded to the temptations which in the disorderly life of the Latin Quarter were only too numerous, and abandoned himself to a life of debauchery. In this unhappy course he was doubtless confirmed by an event which cut him off from the possibility of return to decent life. In a brawl, the rights and wrongs of which are not clearly known. but in which, at least in the ultimate issue, he would not seem to have been the aggressor, he killed his man, and, fleeing from justice, was condemned to banishment or perhaps to death, This was in 1455. Under favour of a letter of pardon he returned to the Latin Quarter in the following year, only to be involved in another scrape. Some Parisian Delilah on whom he had bestowed his affections betraved him into an ambush, where he was stripped and beaten. He fled again, this time from the ridicule he had incurred, firing off a Parthian shot in the form of a series of satirical bequests in verse to his enemies, known as the Petit Testament. We find him next involved in a burglary at the Collège de Navarre, in Paris, the investigation of which revealed the existence of a band of thieves, of which Villon himself was one of the leading spirits. He it was who had treated this brotherhood of 'minions of the moon' to a junket at the tavern by way of prelude to the enterprise. In this escapade, as in many of the traits of his character, he reminds us irresistibly of that type of the witty debauchee, Sir John Falstaff. Most of the members of the band came ultimately to the gallows: Villon himself escaped the death penalty, and left to posterity a memento of his peril in the form of the famous Ballade des Pendus (quoted on p. 165), in which he pictures himself in imagination

already swinging with some half-dozen of his fellow-thieves on the gibbet of Montfaucon. In 1461 he is in the episcopal prison of Meung-sur-Loire, where he has spent the summer on bread and water, probably for highway robbery. Such a penance must have been peculiarly distasteful to a bon vivant like Villon, the fruits of whose robberies were spent in tavern orgies, when indeed he did not simplify the exchange by taking his toll in kind, in the form of roast and baked. He was delivered from it by the amnesties wherewith Louis XI graced his accession, and towards Christmas of the same year (1461), in the thirtieth year of his age, he wrote the Grand Testament, after which history knows no more of him.

It is upon the Grand Testament that the fame of Villon as a poet rests. The form of the Testament, with its string of satirical bequests, was not new: in the Grand Testament, however, these are interspersed with ballades and rondeaux, in which the poet pours forth his regrets for his vanished youth and his wasted life. his melancholy reflections upon the catastrophe of death which impends over all of human kind, which has swept away his parents and friends, and all the great and all the beautiful of former times, now melted away like the snows of vester-year: his bitter complaints of betraved love and his no less bitter remorse for acknowledged sin; the whole nevertheless intermingled with such ribaldry and buffoonery as make of the Grand Testament only too true a picture of his motley life. Throughout the Grand Testament there thrills a chord which had as yet hardly been touched in French poetry, the chord of deep personal feeling. Lyric is not with Villon, as with the trouvères, a mere fashionable toy or a trade plied to earn bread. Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh. And it is because the feelings, which from the circumstances of his life burn within him at a white heat, of the transience of life, of the burdensomeness of sin, and of the inevitability of death-it is because these feelings, though perhaps felt less keenly, are yet strangers to none of us, that Villon is one of the few poets in its estimate of whom posterity has never appreciably wavered,

From the Grand Testament.1

Item, donne à ma povre mère ²
Pour saluer nostre Maistresse,
Qui pour moy ot ³ douleur amere,
Dieu le scet, et mainte tristesse:
Autre chastel n'ay, ne fortresse,
Où me retraye ⁴ corps et ame,
Quand sur moy court malle destresse,
Ne ma mere, la povre femme.

BALLADE

que Villon feit à la requeste de sa mere pour prier Nostre-Dame.

Dame des cieulx, regente terrienne ⁵, Emperiere des infernaux paluz ⁶, Recevez moy, vostre humble chrestienne, Que comprinse ⁷ soye entre vos esleuz ⁸. Ce non obstant qu' ⁹ oncques rien ne valuz. Les biens de vous, ma dame et ma maistresse, Sont trop plus grans que ne suis pecheresse, Sans lesquelz biens ame ne peut merir ¹⁰ N'avoir les cieulx, je n'en suis jungleresse ¹¹. En ceste foi je vueil ¹² vivre et mourir.

¹ The extracts from Villon are given in the text of Auguste Lognon,

by the kind permission of Messrs. Alphonse Lemerre.

² 'Item, I will and bequeath to my poor mother.' Villon's bequest to his mother is the ballade which follows, a prayer to the Virgin, Nostre Maistresse. It is put into the mouth of his povre mère, hence the feminines chrétienne, pécheresse, &c.

8 ent.

- ⁵ reine de la terre.
- omprise.
 bien que.
- menteuse.

- où je puisse me réfugier.
- des marais des enfers.
- 10 mériter.
- 12 veux.

A vostre Filz dictes 1 que je suis sienne : De luy sovent mes pechiez aboluz². Pardonne mov 3 comme a l'Egipcienne 4. Ou comme il feist au clerc Théophilus 5, Leguel par vous fut quitte et absoluz 6. Combien 7 qu'il eust au deable fait promesse. Preservez mov. que ne face jamais ce 8. Vierge portant, sans rompure 9 encourir, Le sacrement 10 qu'on celebre à la messe. En ceste fov je vueil vivre et mourir.

Femme je suis povrette et ancienne, Qui riens ne scay: oncques lettre ne leuz 11: Au moustier vov 12 dont suis paroissienne. Paradis paint, où sont harpes et luz 13. Et ung enfer ou dampnez sont boulluz 14: L'ung me fait paour, l'autre jove et liesse 15. La jove avoir me fav 16, haulte Déesse, A qui pecheurs doivent tous recourir. Comblez de foy, sans fainte ne paresse, En ceste foy je vueil vivre et mourir.

3 qu'il me pardonne.

4 Mary of Egypt, whose profligate life, miraculous conversion through the intervention of the Virgin, long penance in Egypt, and final salvation are narrated in the Acta Sanctorum.

⁵ Theophilus, like Faust, sold himself to the devil in a written document signed with his blood, but, straightway repenting, invoked the aid of the Virgin, and from her received again the written pact.

wrested by her from the devil.

8 que je ne fasse jamais ceci, i.e. me promettre au diable.

⁹ blâme, péché.

¹ dites. : 2 abolis.

obj. of portant. The 'sacrament' which the Virgin bore without incurring sin was Christ. 18 je vois au monastère, à l'église.

¹¹ je ne lus.

¹³ luths. ¹⁴ où les damnés sont bouillis. 16 fais-moi avoir.

¹⁵ gaîté.

ENVOT 1

Vous portastes, digne Vierge, princesse, Iesus regnant, qui n'a ne fin ne cesse. Le Tout-Puissant, prenant nostre foiblesse, Laissa les cieulx et nous vint secourir, Offrit à mort sa tres chiere jeunesse. Nostre Seigneur tel est, tel le confesse, En ceste fov je vueil vivre et mourir.

L'ÉPITAPHE

en forme de ballade 2 que feit Villon pour luy et ses compagnons, s'attendant estre pendu avec eux,

(From the codicil of the Grand Testament.)

Freres humains, qui après nous vivez, N'avez les cuers contre nous endurcis. Car, se pitié de nous povres avez, Dieu en aura plus tost de vous mercis. Vous nous voiez cv atachez cing, six, Quant de la chair, que trop avons nourrie.3 Elle est pieca 4 devorée et pourrie, Et nous, les os, devenons cendre et pouldre. De nostre mal personne ne s'en rie, Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre!

Se freres vous clamons, pas n'en devez Avoir desdaing, quoy que fusmes occis Par justice. Toutesfois, vous scavez Que tous hommes n'ont pas bon sens assis :

¹ The initial letters of the lines of the envoi form an acrostic.

² Swinburne has given us a masterly translation of this well-known

³ Villon was a notorious bon vivant. The fruits of his highway robberies were spent in orgies. 4 il y a pièce, i.e. il y a longtemps.

Excusez-nous — puis que sommes transis 1 — Envers le filz de la Vierge Marie, Que sa grace ne soit pour nous tarie, Nous preservant de l'infernale fouldre. Nous sommes mors, ame ne nous harie 2; Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre!

La pluye nous a buez ³ et lavez, Et le soleil desechez et noircis; Pies, corbeaulx, nous ont les yeux cavez ⁴, Et arraché la barbe et les sourcilz. Jamais, nul temps, nous ne sommes assis ⁵: Puis çà, puis là, comme le vent varie, A son plaisir sans cesser nous charie, Plus becquetez d'oiseaulx que dez à couldre ⁶. Ne soiez donc de nostre confrairie, Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre!

ENVOI

Prince Jhesus, qui sur tous a maistrie, Garde qu'Enfer n'ait de nous seigneurie: A luy n'ayons que faire ne que souldre ⁷. Hommes, icy n'a point de mocquerie, Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre!

7 solder, payer.

¹ morts (Lat. transire). 2 harcèle, subjunctive, 'let no one harry us.'
3 'laundered.' 4 'have pecked out our eyes.' 5 en repos.
6 dés à coudre, 'thimbles,' with reference to their 'pitted 'appearance.

BOOK II. THE RENAISSANCE

INTRODUCTION

MEDIAEVAL French Literature closes with the fifteenth century. It grew up, as we have seen, in entire independence of any foreign influence, and its material was for the most part as indigenous as its inspiration. The Middle Ages did indeed read Latin and assiduously almost all the Latin authors known to Greek us, but without entering into their spirit. They in the read them, much as a child reads Shakespeare, Middle for the story, remaining blind to their deeper Ages. significance, as also to their charms of style. the Greek authors the Western world knew nothing at first hand. It derived from late Latin sources disfigured versions of some portions of Greek legend and Greek history, and there reached it some vague echoes of Aristotle, distorted through the medium of a chain of translations. The poetic material of the Middle Ages was to some extent augmented from these sources, but there was no transfusion into it of the Greek or Latin spirit.

This wholly homespun literature was by no means General the entirely despicable thing that it seemed to a characterlater age that had drunk deep of the fountains of istics of Greek and Latin learning. Like the literature itself Literaof seventeenth-century France, it permeated every ture. corner of Europe, commanding admiration and provoking imitation. This fact alone is sufficient proof of its vitality. It was strong in its originality, in the exuberance of its imagination. But it was restricted in range; it was almost exclusively objective, rarely plunging beneath the surface, either in its analysis of human character or in its

interpretation of the course of events: and it was wanting in the artistic sense—it had no inkling of the art of composition, of that balancing in due proportion of part against part which results in an organic whole; and little feeling for the magic of style, which enhances the value of what is said by the manner in which it is said

French Language

The language which served it as instrument was Mediaeval homogeneous, flexible, rich in vocabulary, and had a certain naïve picturesqueness of its own. But it was poor in those elements which lend themselves to nice distinctions and philosophical analysis.

Fifteenthcentury dacadence.

In the fifteenth century it seemed as if the impetus to literary creation were exhausted. The Chansons de Geste, after growing more and more prolix, and spinning ever into a thinner thread as they were longer drawn out, finally cast off the burden of rhyme, and found the last term of their degeneration in the prose romances. The trouvère lyrics lost themselves in the puerilities of a complicated rhythm. The fabliaux alone retained some semblance of vitality in the audacities of the farces and soties. Failing some new impulse, it seemed as if creative activity in literature must come to a standstill. The required impulse was imparted by the concurrence of a series of events, though it would perhaps be juster to regard some of these as signs and fruits of the new spirit, rather than as mere casual awakeners of it. The unparalleled burst of activity of human thought which they inaugurated is known as the Renaissance.

Revival of Letters.

First amongst these new factors must be placed the revelation to the mediaeval world of the treasures of Greek and Latin literature, the Revival of Letters. France had already seen two attempts at the revival of classical learning—the one made by Charlemagne, with the Englishman Alcuin as its chief instrument; the other by the scholastic

philosophers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. But these were both destined to prove false dawns. The first rays of the rising sun fell upon Italy, where in the fourteenth century Dante, Petrarch. and Boccaccio, amongst others, kindled an abiding enthusiasm for antique letters. Their efforts were seconded in a remarkable way by the catastrophe which overtook the Eastern Empire in 1453, when its capital, Constantinople, fell into the hands of the Turks. The Greek refugees fled to Italy, bearing with them in their precious manuscripts, and their no less precious power to expound them, the surest

guarantee of their welcome. By one of the most fruitful coincidences in the

history of mankind, the greatest obstacle to the spread of the new learning, the costliness of the reproduction of the manuscripts, was removed at almost the very same moment by the invention Invention of printing. And that no impetus to the enlarge- of Printment of the human mind should be wanting, the ing. discovery of America in 1492 widened the bounds Disof the earth and kindled the spirit of adventure, covery of to be followed not long after by the promulgation of the Copernican system, which similarly widened The Cothe bounds of the universe and opened new fields pernican to speculation. It was like the throwing open of so many windows in a long closed chamber. admission of the flood of fresh air was followed by an exhilaration, a stimulation of all the activities of man, comparable only to that which followed on the French Revolution, itself in truth only a distant repercussion of the Renaissance.

France came into contact with the Renaissance, The Renaissance in the Italian sance in wars of Charles VIII and Louis XII, and the seeds France. of the new learning, fostered by Francis I and his sister Marguerite of Navarre, soon sprang into

vigorous life on the banks of the Seine.

The religious Reforma-

Parallel in the first instance with the purely literary Renaissance was the no less quickening movement towards reform in religion. Similar in their origin, both inspired by a return to antiquity, both in revolt against the routine of mediaevalism. the Renaissance and the Reformation at first went hand in hand. But the essential cleavage between the two was not long in making itself felt. For though both returned to the past to make a new beginning, both did not return to the same point in the past. The Renaissance linked itself on to Greek and Roman antiquity, to pagan materialism, with its cult of nature, its unrestrained gratification of the senses: the Reformation to Hebrew and Christian antiquity, to spiritual mysticism, with its antagonism to the pagan spirit, its mortification of the senses, its denial of the efficacy of the human intellect. The partisans of the two spirits soon found themselves ranged in hostile camps. In France and Italy the Renaissance triumphed forthwith, and the Reformation was crushed out. In Germany and the Teutonic countries it was the Reformation that triumphed, and the Renaissance was mutilated or deferred.

Divers currents in the Renaissance, Even within the stream of the Renaissance itself there were divers currents. To some minds its appeal was purely aesthetic. What attracted them in the ancient literatures was their artistry in poetical form and style. Concerning themselves little with the wealth of new ideas, they set themselves to enrich their own language and widen its range of expression, and to import into their native poetry the artistic elements which comparison with the ancient masterpieces could not fail to show that it lacked. Others again were attracted by the philosophy of the ancients, yet others by their science, or by their frank surrender of themselves to the pleasures of the senses, to the instincts of the

natural man, which contrasted so strangely with the Christian ideal of renunciation and with the monkish

asceticism of the Middle Ages.

These various currents and cross-currents are all Scholars reflected in the literature of the sixteenth century. and Trans-Thus we have the scholars and the translators, lators. men who, like Henri Estienne, the compiler of the monumental Thesaurus linguae graecae 1, forged the key to the new learning; or like Amyot (1513-93) whose translation of Plutarch's Lives (1559) is amongst the few translations which have the merit and have exercised the influence of original works. Then we have the theologians on both sides, amongst Theowhom Calvin (1509-64), the founder of the branch logians. of Protestantism which bears his name, produced in his Institution chrétienne a work which first showed to what heights French prose might yet attain, whilst on the Catholic side St. Francois de Sales (1568-1622) in his Introduction à la vie dévote and his Lettres spirituelles furnished models of a style as gracious and winning as that of Calvin was vigorous and austere. In the earlier part of the century, before it has as yet fully emerged from the penumbra of the mediaeval eclipse, Clément Marot is the chief figure amongst the poets. Though not yet breaking with mediaeval forms, he shows an appreciation of the 'labour of the file' such as had hitherto been unknown to French literature, though soon to become its chief preoccupation. Then the members of the Pléiade, with Ronsard at their head, are the representatives in chief of those who seek to perfect the language, and to wrest from the ancients the secret of the graces of style and poetical form. They too are the first founders in France of classic tragedy and comedy. Rabelais heads the revolt Revolt against asceticism, and in the device of his Abbaye against de Thélème, the famous 'Fay ce que vouldras', Do cism.

Treasury of the Greek Language.

Interest

Study of

Manners

and Men

ral instincts against the monkish mortification of the flesh. Rabelais, too, represents the thirst for scientific knowledge, which was one side of the in Science. Renaissance spirit, and which he thought, wrongly of course, the lore of the ancients could gratify to the full. In Montaigne appears the passion for the study of manners and men which dominates French literature throughout the two succeeding centuries. and the scepticism generated by the clash between the accepted faith and the ancient philosophies—in Montaigne an ultra-scepticism which shrinks from even so much assertion as is implied in the affirmation of ignorance and accordingly formulates this declaration in the interrogative form: Que scais-je? The reformed religion, too, before perishing out of France, endows French literature with two notable

Poets.

poets. Du Bartas and d'Aubigné.

CHAPTER T

CLÉMENT MAROT

CLÉMENT MAROT (1495-1544) was the son of Jean Marot, himself a poet, and, though of mean birth, attached to the Court, where he became valet de chambre to Francois Ier. Clément, after a few ineffectual gropings after a career in law (where he showed his natural vocation by becoming one of those amateur comedians of the Middle Ages, the Enfants sans souci) and in arms, followed in his father's footsteps, won by his verse the attention of Marguerite de Valois, sister of François Ier, and became valet de chambre to her, and afterwards to the king her brother. He followed François Ier into Italy, and was wounded and made prisoner at the Battle of Pavia. His patroness Marguerite had decided leanings towards the reformed faith, and on his return to France Marot found himself confronted with a charge of heresy, and was lodged in the prison of the Châtelet, for having 'eaten bacon in Lent'. Thence he was, through the instrumentality of a friend, transferred to Chartres, where his gaoler, the Bishop of Chartres, was in secret his friend. In this more kindly durance he wrote his Enfer, a satire on the prison of the Châtelet, and made a modernized version of the Roman de la Rose. Scarcely out of prison, he was sent to gaol again for having forcibly rescued a prisoner from the hands of the law, but again procured his liberty by a witty rhymed letter to the king. After a brief period of tranquillity, his dallyings with Calvinism made it again necessary to seek safety in flight. In 1536 he returned to France. having purchased indemnity, as it would seem, by a formal abjuration of his heresy. For seven years he enjoyed halcvon days, standing high in the king's favour, reigning supreme as the greatest French poet, and surrounded by a court of admiring Then, by a strange reverse of fortune, the too great disciples. success of a new poetical enterprise ruined him. He translated the first fifty of the Psalms rhythmically into French, and king, princes and princesses, all the Court, fell to humming them, each to his own tunes. The Huguenots, too, adopted them, and the Sorbonne, opposed to French versions of the Scriptures, which

smacked of Calvinism,—perhaps, also, honestly shocked at the custom of singing the Psalms to popular airs,—took alarm. Marot thought it wise to flee before the storm, and took refuge in Geneva. But his Calvinism was not more than skin-deep. He was a feather-brained poet, ever ready with a witty shaft against the Catholics, but by no means a Puritan in his life. And so the Calvinists, though they chanted his Psalms, took umbrage at his conduct. He fled from Geneva and took refuge in Turin, where he died in the following year.

Though just breathed upon by the spirit of the Renaissance (he translated Virgil and Ovid) and involved in the quarrels of the Reformation, Marot as a poet derives, strictly speaking, from the traditions of mediaeval literature. He cultivated the ballade, the rondeau, all the old French forms which the Pléiade was to denounce, and in addition to his version of the Roman de la Rose put forth a re-touched edition of Villon. He excels in the epigram, in the elegant trifling of society and occasional verses. in which he has a lightness of touch and a sprightliness of wit which remind us of Voltaire. He is the prince of that genre which was so indispensable a weapon in the hands of the poet in the days of literary patronage—the 'begging letter'. His 'Letter to the King on having been robbed' is the masterpiece of its kind and the best known of his writings. His precious scoundrel of a valet, who is a paragon of all the vices, but, saving that little drawback, the 'best fellow in the world', has become a by-word in French literature

AU ROY, POUR AVOIR ESTÉ DÉROBÉ

On dict bien vray, la maulvaise Fortune Ne vient jamais, qu'elle n'en apporte une ¹ Ou deux ou trois avecques elle (Syre) ². Vostre cueur noble en sçauroit bien que dire; ³ Et moy, chetif, qui ne suis Roy, ne rien, L'ay esprouvé, et vous compteray bien,

¹ 'Misfortunes never come singly, but in battalions.' ² Sire. ³ 'would have enough to say on this subject.' The King, to whom the letter is addressed, was François I^{er}, whose ill-fated campaigns in Italy Marot had shared.

Si vous voulez, comme vint la besongne.1 J'avois un jour un vallet de Gascongne. Gourmand, ivrongne, et asseuré menteur². Pipeur, larron, jureur, blasphemateur, Sentant la hart 3 de cent pas à la ronde. Au demourant, le meilleur filz 4 du monde,

Ce venerable hillot 4 fut adverty De quelque argent, que m'aviez departy 5. Et que ma bourse avoit grosse apostume 6. Si 7 se leva plus tost que de coustume. Et me va prendre en tapinovs icelle.8 Puis la vous 9 meit tresbien soubz son esselle 10. Argent et tout (cela se doit entendre). Et ne crov point que ce fust pour la rendre. Car oneques puis 11 n'en av ouv parler.

Brief, le villain ne s'en voulut aller Pour si petit 12: mais encor il me happe Saye 13 et bonnet, chausses, pourpoint et cappe 14; De mes habitz (en effect) il pilla Tous les plus beaux, et puis s'en habilla Si justement, 15 qu'à le veoir ainsi estre. Vous l'eussiez prins (en plein jour) pour son maistre.

Finablement, de ma chambre il s'en va Droict à l'estable. 16 où deux chevaulx trouva :

2 'An impudent liar.' 1 'the way of it'.

3 'reeking of the halter, the gallows'.

4 fils and hillot, which is a Gascon diminutive of the same word,

are both to be taken in the sense of 'lad'.

6 donné en partage. The subject of aviez, being implied in the termination, is otherwise unexpressed, as frequently in O.Fr. and throughout this poem.

A medical term, 'abscess, swelling'

'aussi, 'and so'.

'the same,' i.e. the purse.

roughout this post.

of aussi, 'and so'.

of ethic dative, 'puts it you'.

in jamais depuis (Lat. unquam postea).

12 si peu de chose.

14 'cape, hooded cloak'.

13 'cloak' (Lat. sagum).
14 'cape,
15 'He put them on and they fitted him so well.'

16 This sense survives in the Eng. stable. In modern French 'a stable for horses' is écurie, whereas étable is 'cow-byre'.

Laisse le pire, et sur le meilleur monte, Pique et s'en va. Pour abreger le compte,¹ Soyez certain, qu'au partir du dict lieu, N'oublia rien, fors ² qu'à me dire adieu.

Ainsi s'en va, chatouilleux de la gorge 3, Ledict vallet, monté comme un sainct Georges, Et vous 4 laissa Monsieur dormir son soul 5, Qui au resveil n'eust sceu finer d'un soul 6. Ce Monsieur là (Syre) c'estoit moy mesme, Qui sans mentir, fuz au matin bien blesme, Quand je me vey sans honneste vesture, Et fort fasché de perdre ma monture; Mais de l'argent que vous m'aviez donné, Je ne fuz point de le perdre estonné; Car vostre argent (trèsdebonnaire Prince) Sans point de faulte est subject à la pince 7.

Bien tost après ceste fortune là, Une autre pire encores se mesla De m'assaillir, et chacun jour m'assault, Me menaçant de me donner le sault ⁸, Et de ce sault m'envoyer à l'envers Rithmer ⁹ soubz terre et y faire des vers ¹⁰.

C'est une lourde et longue maladie De trois bons moys, qui m'a toute eslourdie ¹¹ La povre teste, et ne veult terminer, Ains me contrainct d'apprendre à cheminer ¹²,

^{1 &#}x27;To cut a long story short.'
2 excepté.
3 'with his throat tickling.' He feels in fancy the rope already round it. 4 Ethic dative, 'left you his master.' 5 son soûl, 'his fill'.
6 'clinch a bargain with a half-penny.' Finer is the Old French 'finish', and from this use of it is derived the modern 'finance'.
7 'is liable to be stolen, and no mistake.'

s' is hable to be stolen, and no mistake.
s' give me the leap', make me die. Modern French has sauter le pas for 'to die'.

o rimer. 10 A grisly pun on ver and vers. 11 alourdie.
12 'to learn to walk' (of the staggering gait of a convalescent).

Tant affoibly m'a 1 d'estrange maniere : Et si m'a faict la cuvsse heronniere.2

Que diray plus? Au miserable corps Dont je vous parle, il n'est demouré, fors Le povre esprit qui lamente et souspire, Et en pleurant tasche à vous faire rire.

.

Et pour autant (Syre) que 3 suis à vous 4. De troys jours l'un viennent taster mon poulx 5 Messieurs Braillon, le Coq, Akaquia 6, Pour me garder d'aller jusque à quia 7.

Vovlà comment, depuis neuf moys en ca 8, Je suis traicté. Or, ce que me laissa Mon larronneau 9, long temps a 10 l'av vendu, Et en sirops et julez 11 despendu 12: Ce néantmoins 13, ce que je vous en mande, N'est pour vous faire ou requeste ou demande : Je ne veulx point tant de gens ressembler. Qui n'ont soucy autre que d'assembler 14: Tant qu'ilz vivront ilz demanderont, eulx : Mais je commence à devenir honteux. Et ne veulx plus à voz dons m'arrester 15. Je ne dy pas, si voulez rien 16 prester.

¹ elle m'a tant affaibli.

^{2 &#}x27;has made my leg as lean as a heron's shank.'

³ aussi vrai que.

⁴ Marot was valet de chambre to François Ier. 5 pouls. 6 The king's doctors. The last is an assumed name from the Greek 'freedom from evil'.

^{7 &#}x27;To the last extremity.' The term, derived from mediaeval scholastics, means to be reduced to silence in an argument (Lat. quia).

jusqu'à ce jour.
Thieves' whelp'. Humorous formation on the model of lionceau, &c.

juleps. to hoard. 12 dépensé. 10 il y a longtemps. 13 malgré cela. 15 'depend upon.'

¹⁶ quelque chose.

Que ne le prenne. Il n'est point de presteur (S'il veut prester) qui ne face un debteur. Et scavez vous (Syre) comment je pave? Nul ne le scait, si premier ne l'essave : Vous me devrez (si je puis) de retour,1 Et vous feray encores un bon tour. A celle fin, qu'il n'v ait faulte nulle, Je vous ferav une belle cedulle 2. A vous paver (sans usure, il s'entend) Quand on verra tout le monde content : Ou, si voulez, à payer ce sera Quand votre los 3 et renom cessera.4

In the conclusion of the letter, Marot lavs aside the cap and bells, and winds up in loftier style (mon style j'enfleray), with a highly flattering eulogy of the King, as a 'lover of the Muses. more than Mars environed with honour, the kingliest king that ever was crowned'.

4 Of the two terms set for payment the first is of course a humorous, the second a complimentary periphrase for 'never'.

^{1 &#}x27;I will so repay you that you shall remain indebted to me. Marot doubtless hints at the frequent boast of the poets that they confer immortality on those they sing.

2 'A schedule, bill, promise to pay.' A 'little I.O.U.', as we might say.

3 louange (Lat. laus).

CHAPTER II

THE PLÉIADE

PIERRE DE RONSARD (1524-85) was born in the Château de la Poissonnière, near Vendôme. At nine vears of age he entered the Collège de Navarre, which he quitted six months later, by reason of delicate health, to become a page in the royal household. At the age of thirteen years he was attached to the suite of James V of Scotland, and spent three years in Scotland and England. On his return to France he was attached to the ambassadorial service in Germany and Piedmont, and seemed fairly launched on a diplomatic career when at the age of eighteen he was smitten with deafness, a visitation which changed the course of his life and made of him a votary of the Muses. Acquainted with English, German, and Italian, he was all but ignorant of the classic literatures, and he spent the following seven years in supplying this deficiency. In particular he devoted himself to the study of Greek, sharing with his young friend, Jean-Antoine de Baif, to whose father, the ambassador, he had been attached as secretary, the lessons of Jean Daurat, one of the professors of Greek whom the Renaissance had called into being. Daurat himself enjoyed considerable reputation in his own day as a poet, but it is as the nurse of the fledglings of the Pléiade that he has won an enduring name, for not only Ronsard and de Baïf, but also Jodelle and Remi Belleau, not to mention other lesser lights, were members of the strenuous little band who by the study, translation, and imitation of the ancient authors prepared themselves under his guidance to undertake the regeneration of French poetry. The designation of Pléiade by which this cluster of poetic stars was afterwards known had already been borne by a group of Alexandrian poets. The tale of seven which completed the constellation was made up by the addition of Pontus de Thyard and Joachim du Bellav. The manifesto of the new school, the Défense et illustration de la langue française, which appeared in 1549, was nominally the work

of Du Bellay, but the ideas which it expounds are those of Ronsard, the acknowledged chief of the school. In the following vear (1550) Ronsard published the first part of his sonnets, under the title of Amours, and four books of Odes. Their publication provoked the hostility of the school of Marot, who were in possession of the field, but Ronsard's triumph was swift and complete. most of his adversaries rallied to the new luminary, and honours, pensions, and favours rained upon him. Other Odes, two books of Humnes, and the remainder of the Amours, followed in rapid succession. The new king, Charles IX, surpassed even his predecessors, Henri II and Francois II, in the prodigality of his favours, and the poet showed his gratitude by publishing his Discours des misères de ce temps and his Remontrances au peuple de France, in which he undertook the defence of the throne and the Catholic religion against Calvinism. His enemies retorted by all kinds of scandalous and fantastic accusations, as, amongst others, by the charge of frank paganism. This charge was based upon a frolic in which the friends of Jodelle had indulged after the performance of his Cléonâtre in 1552, when the revival of classic tragedy had been celebrated, in accordance with antique customs, by the sacrifice, or simulated sacrifice, of a he-goat to Bacchus. In 1572 Ronsard published the first four cantos of an epic poem, La Franciade, which was intended to be for France what the Aeneid was for Rome. The poem, however, was never completed. On the death of Charles IX, Ronsard withdrew to one of the abbevs which the King had bestowed upon him. There he spent the last years of his life in revising, not always happily, his earlier works. His fame was at its zenith, and foreign monarchs, our own Elizabeth included, vied with his own in doing him honour. Since his death his glory has suffered the most whimsical of vicissitudes. Decried by Malherbe, the founder. and by Boileau, the legislator of the classical school, of whom he was in reality a pioneer, his popularity waned until in the eighteenth century it was possible to say that there was not a single person living who had read his works. From this utter oblivion he was rescued early in the nineteenth century by Sainte-Beuve, and hailed by the Romantics as one of their ancestors. The claim, as we have seen, was not very well founded, though the usage of Ronsard in vocabulary and versification has certain features in common with the theories and practice of the Romantics; but a victim of the injustice of Malherbe and Boileau had peculiar claims upon their sympathy. Since his rehabilitation the fame of Ronsard has steadily progressed, and while it is unlikely that it will ever recover the lustre with which it shone during his life, it seems scarcely possible that it should ever again suffer eclipse.

I SEND TO THEE A ROSY WREATH

Je vous envoye un bouquet que ma main Vient de trier de ces fleurs épanies ¹; Qui ne les eust à ce vespre cueillies,² Cheutes ³ à terre elles fussent demain.

Cela vous soit un exemple certain Que vos beautez, bien qu'elles soient fleuries, En peu de temps seront toutes flaitries 4, Et comme fleurs périront tout soudain.

Le temps s'en va, le temps s'en va, ma dame; Las! le temps non, mais nous nous en allons, Et tost serons estendus sous la lame⁵,

Et des amours desquelles nous parlons, Quand serons morts, n'en sera plus nouvelle. Pour ce aymez-moy ce pendant qu'estes belle.

TO CASSANDRA

(From the Odes)

Mignonne, allons voir si la rose, Qui ce matin avoit desclose Sa robe de pourpre au soleil, A point perdu, ceste vesprée,⁶ Les plis de sa robe pourprée, Et son teint au vostre pareil.

6 N'a point perdu ce soir.

¹ épanouies.

² A moins qu'on ne les eût cueillies ce soir.

³ tombées.

⁴ flétries.

⁵ pierre sépulcrale.

Las! voyez comme en peu d'espace, Mignonne, elle a dessus la place, Las! las! ses beautez laissé cheoir! O vrayment marastre Nature, Puis qu'une telle fleur ne dure Que du matin jusques au soir! Donc, si vous me croyez, mignonne, Tandis que vostre âge fleuronne ¹ En sa plus verte nouveauté, Cueillez, cueillez vostre jeunesse: Comme à ceste fleur, la vieillesse Fera ternir vostre beauté.

SONNETS

'Gather therefore the Rose whilest yet is prime, For soone comes age that will her pride deflowre.'

(Sonnets pour Hélène)

Quand vous serez bien vieille, au soir, à la chandelle, Assise auprès du feu, devidant et filant, Direz, chantant mes vers, et vous esmerveillant : Ronsard me celebroit du temps que j'estois belle.

Lors vous n'aurez servante oyant ² telle nouvelle, Desja sous le labeur à demy sommeillant, Qui, au bruit de Ronsard, ne s'aille réveillant, Benissant vostre nom de louange immortelle.

Je seray sous la terre, et, fantosme sans os, Par les ombres myrteux je prendray mon repos; Vous, serez au fouyer³ une vieille accroupie,

Regrettant mon amour et vostre fier desdain. Vivez, si m'en croyez, n'attendez à demain; Cueillez dès aujourd'huy les roses de la vie.

¹ fleurit. ² entendant. ³ foyer.

'Strew on her roses, roses.'
(From the Amours)

Comme on void sur la branche au mois de may la rose En sa belle jeunesse, en sa premiere fleur, Rendre le ciel jaloux de sa vive couleur, Quand l'aube de ses pleurs au poinct du jour l'arrose,

La Grace dans sa fueille et l'Amour se repose, Embasmant ¹ les jardins et les arbres d'odeur; Mais, battue ou de pluye ou d'excessive ardeur ² Languissante, elle meurt, fueille à fueille déclose:

Ainsi, en ta premiere et jeune nouveauté, Quand la terre et le ciel honoroient ta beauté, La Parque t'a tuée, et cendre tu reposes.

Pour obseques reçoy mes larmes et mes pleurs, Ce vase plein de laict, ce pannier plein de fleurs, Afin que, vif et mort, ton corps ne soit que roses.

THE HAWTHORN

Bel aubespin verdissant,
Fleurissant,
Le long de ce beau rivage,
Tu es vestu jusqu'au bas
Des longs bras
D'une lambrunche ³ sauvage.

Deux camps drillants ⁴ de fourmis Se sont mis En garnison sous ta souche; Et dans ton tronc mi-mangé Arrangé

Les avettes 5 ont leur couche.

embaumant.

chaleur.
 vigne sauvage.
 les abeilles ont arrangé leur couche.

Le gentil rossignolet Nouvelet 1 Avecques sa bien-aimée. Pour ses amours alleger 2 Vient loger Tous les ans en ta ramée. Sur ta cyme il fait son ny, Bien garny De laine et de fine sove. Où ses petits esclorrent.3 Qui seront De mes mains la douce prove. Or vy, gentil aubespin, Vy sans fin. Vy sans que jamais tonnerre Ou la coignée.4 ou les vents. Ou les temps Te puissent ruer par terre.

CONTRE LES BUCHERONS DE LA FOREST DE GASTINE

(From the Élégies)

Escoute, Bucheron, arreste un peu le bras; Ce ne sont pas des bois que tu jettes à bas; Ne vois-tu pas le sang lequel degoute à force Des Nymphes qui vivoient dessous la dure escorce? Sacrilege meurdrier⁵, si on pend un voleur Pour piller un butin de bien peu de valeur, Combien de feux, de fers, de morts, et de détresses Merites-tu, meschant, pour tuer nos Déesses?

5 meurtrier (here two syllables).

Diminutif de nouveau, comme rossignolet de rossignol.
 pour soulager son amour.
 éclôront.
 cognée

Forest, haute maison des oiseaux bocagers! Plus ¹ le Cerf solitaire et les Chevreuls legers Ne paistront sous ton ombre, et ta verte crinière Plus du Soleil d'Esté ne rompra la lumière.

Plus l'amoureux Pasteur sus un tronq adossé, Enflant ² son flageolet à quatre trous persé, Son mastin à ses pieds, à son flanc la houlette, Ne dira plus l'ardeur de sa belle Janette; Tout deviendra muet, Echo sera sans vois; Tu deviendras campagne, et en lieu de tes bois, Dont l'ombrage incertain lentement se remue, Tu sentiras le soc, le coutre et la charrue; Tu perdras ton silence et haletans d'effroy Ny Satyres ny Pans ne viendront plus chez toy.

Adieu, vieille Forest, le jouet de Zephyre, Où premier j'accorday les langues de ma Lyre, Où premier j'entendi les fleches résonner D'Apollon, qui me vint tout le cœur estonner³; Où premier admirant la belle Calliope, Je devins amoureux de sa neuvaine trope⁴, Quand sa main sur le front cent roses me jeta Et de son propre laiet Euterpe m'allaita.

Adieu, vieille Forest, adieu testes sacrées, De tableaux ⁵ et de fleurs autrefois honorées, Maintenant le desdain des passans alterez, Qui, bruslez en l'Esté des rayons etherez, Sans plus trouver le frais de tes douces verdures, Accusent tes meurtriers et leur disent injures.

Adieu, chesnes, couronne aux vaillans citoyens,6

¹ jamais plus.
² Here étonner is taken in the strict etymological sense (cf. tonnerre).
The god bursts on the heart of his votary 'like a thunder-bolt'.

⁴ 'her ninefold troop,' the Muses.

⁵ 'votive tablets.'

^{4 &#}x27;her ninefold troop,' the Muses. 5 'votive tablets.'
6 The civic crown of oak leaves was awarded to the soldier who had saved the life of a comrade in battle.

Arbres de Jupiter, germes Dodonéens ¹, Qui premiers aux humains donnastes à repaistre ²; Peuples vrayment ingrats, qui n'ont sçeu recognoistre Les biens receus de vous, peuples vrayment grossiers, De massacrer ainsi leurs peres nourriciers.

Que l'homme est malheureux qui au monde se fie ! O Dieux, que veritable est la Philosophie, Qui dit que toute chose à la fin perira, Et qu'en changeant de forme une autre vestira!

De Tempé la valée un jour sera montagne, Et la cyme d'Athos une large campagne; Neptune ³ quelquefois ⁴ de blé sera couvert: La matiere demeure et la forme se perd.

JOACHIM DU BELLAY (1524-60) was born at Liré, in Anjou, of a family which had already given to France three distinguished brothers, his uncles, two of them writers of memoirs, the third the Cardinal du Bellay. Left an orphan at an early age, he was brought up by a brother who himself died whilst Joachim was still a youth. An illness of two years left him deaf, like Ronsard. and this deafness gave him, too, his first bias to a literary career. He studied law at Poitiers, and on his return met Ronsard. two kindred spirits were straightway at one, and by Ronsard Du Bellay was introduced to Daurat, De Baïf, Belleau and Jodelle, In 1549 he put forth the Défense et Illustration de la langue française and immediately afterwards a collection of sonnets in the manner of Petrarch, L'Olive. In 1552 he accompanied his uncle the cardinal on an embassy to Rome, in the capacity of secretary. At Rome he wrote two other sonnet sequences, Les Antiquités de Rome and the Regrets. The former, which are inspired by a sense of the greatness of Rome and the transience of earthly things, were translated by our Spenser, under the title of the 'Ruins of Rome': the latter breathe indignation at the intrigues and corruption of which he was a witness in the 'Eternal City',

 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ Zeus gave oracles at Dodona in Epirus by the rustling of the leaves of an oak-tree.

² The first men were fabled by the Greeks to have lived on acorns, ³ la mer. ⁴ un jour.

and give utterance to the home-sickness which overtook the frail and ailing man for his French friends and his 'little Liré'. The scandal of his satires in the *Regrets* upon Rome and the Romans caused a breach with his uncle the Cardinal, and, sickness, poverty, and grief undermining a delicate constitution, he died, in 1560, at the early age of thirty-five.

The sonnet, though not actually introduced into France by Du Bellay, was by him acclimatized in its new home, and his skill in this form won for him the name of the *Prince of the Sonnet*. Amongst other poems and translations he wrote the *Jeux rustiques*, from which we quote the dainty 'Winnower's Song', which is really, little as one would suspect it, a free translation or adaptation of a neo-Latin poem written by a Venetian scholar.

SONNET

(From the Regrets)

Heureux qui, comme Ulysse, a fait un beau voyage, Ou comme cestuy ¹ là qui conquit la toison, Et puis est retourné, plein d'usage ² et raison, Vivre entre ses parents le reste de son âge! Quand revoirai-je, hélas, de mon petit village Fumer la cheminee; et en quelle saison Revoirai-je le clos de ma pauvre maison Qui m'est une province et beaucoup d'avantage Plus me plaist le sejour qu'ont basty mes ayeulx Que des palais Romains ³ le front audacieux: Plus que le marbre dur me plaist l'ardoise fine: Plus mon Loyre gaulois que le Tybre latin, Plus mon petit Lyré ⁴ que le mont Palatin, Et plus que l'air marin la doulceur Angevine ⁵.

celui. The reference is of course to Jason and the golden fleece.
 expérience.

³ Du Bellay had spent three years in Rome, where the palaces were built of marble.

⁴ A village in Anjou, the birthplace of Du Bellay, now written Liré. ⁵ 'The soft climate of Anjou.'

THE WINNOWER TO THE WINDS

(From Divers Jeux rustiques)

A vous troppe ¹ legere, Qui d'aile passagere Par le monde volez, Et d'un sifflant murmure L'ombrageuse verdure Doulcement esbranlez,

J'offre ces violettes, Ces lis et ces fleurettes Et ces roses icy, Ces vermeillettes roses Tout freschement écloses Et ces œilletz aussi.

De vostre doulce halaine Eventez ceste plaine, Eventez ce sejour; Ce pendant que j'ahanne² A mon blé, que je vanne A la chaleur du jour.

Jean-Antoine de Baïf (1532–89) was born at Venice, where his father was ambassador. Educated by some of the foremost scholars of the time, he was a friend of Ronsard who shared his studies under Daurat. The death of his father in 1547 left him in command of an independency, and enabled him to devote himself to a literary career. He wrote various collections of poems, and translations of Latin and Greek plays. His was an original mind; he dabbled in spelling-reform, and his interest in music led to an attempt to base poetry on music by the imitation of classical

¹ troupe.

² me fatigue. 'Toil and moil.' An expressive old verb which has been lost.

metres in French. Such attempts were not infrequent during the Renaissance, but have long been completely abandoned, as contrary to the genius of the French language. Baïf was also the founder of an abortive Academy of Poetry and Music, which anticipated the French Academy by well nigh a century.

'LIKE A FLOWER OF THE FIELD'

La Rose est belle, et soudain elle passe :
Le Lis est blanc, et dure peu d'espace :
La Violette est bien belle au Printems
Et se vieillist en un petit de tems :
La neige est blanche, et d'une douce pluye
En un moment s'écoule evanouïe :
Et ta beauté belle parfaittement
Ne pourra pas te durer longuement.

'GATHER VE ROSEBUDS'

O nature, nous nous pleignons
Que des fleurs la grace est si breve,
Et qu'aussi tost que les voyons
Un malheur tes dons nous enleve.
Autant qu'un jour est long, autant
L'âge des Roses a duree;
Quand leur jeunesse s'est montree
Leur vieillesse accourt à l'instant.
Celle que l'étoille du jour
A ce matin a veu naissante,
Elle-mesme au soir de retour
A veu la mesme vieillissante.
Un seul bien ces fleurettes ont,
Combien 1 qu'en peu de tems perissent,
Par succès 2 elles refleurissent

¹ Combien que, quoique. 'In howsoever brief a time.' ² successivement.

Et leur saison plus longue font. Fille, vien la Rose cueillir Tandis que sa fleur est nouvelle: Souvien-toy qu'il te faut vieillir Et que tu fletriras comme elle.

LE LOUP, LA MÈRE ET L'ENFANT

Un loup, avant fait une queste De toutes parts, enfin s'arreste A l'huis 1 d'une cabane aux champs. Au cry d'un enfant que sa mere Menacoit, pour le faire taire. De jetter aux loups ravissans. Le loup qui l'ouït en eut jove. Esperant d'y trouver sa prove. Et tout le jour il attendit Que la mere son enfant jette: Mais le soir venu, comme il guette. Un autre langage entendit: Car la mere qui, d'amour tendre, En ses bras son fils alla prendre. Le baisant amoureusement. Avecques lui la paix va faire. Et le dorlotant pour l'attaire 2 Luv parle ainsi flatteusement:

'Nenni, nenni, non, non, ne pleure:
'Si le loup vient, il faut qu'il meure;
'Nous tuons le loup s'il y vient.'
Quand ce propos il ouït dire,
Le loup grommelant se retire:
'Céans 3 l'on dit l'un, l'autre on tient!'

¹ porte (Lat ostium). Cf. huissier, 'door-keeper', our usher.
² faire taire.
³ ici dedans, dans cette maison.

REMI BELLEAU (1528-77) was born at Nogent-le-Rotrou. Beyond his literary activities his life offers little worthy of being chronicled. He was, as has been said, one of the little company of students who grouped themselves into the Pléiade. In 1557 he was in Italy in the suite of Remi de Lorraine, as the tutor of his son. His life was spent in the household of his patron in tranquil devotion to letters. He was borne to the tomb with great pomp by his friends Ronsard, De Baïf, Desportes, and Jamyn, all poets, members or disciples of the Pléiade.

His poem La Bergerie, from which are drawn the graceful verses on April, earned him the title of Peintre de la Nature. He translated Anacreon, parts of Ecclesiastes and Solomon's Song, and wrote a comedy, the Reconnue. His most original poem is the Amours et nouveaux Eschanges (i.e. metamorphoses) des pierres precieuses, vertus et propriétés d'icelles, his models for which were a late Greek poem on the precious stones attributed to Orpheus, the mediaeval lapidaires (cf. p. 101), and the Metamorphoses of Ovid. He was known as le gentil Belleau, 'the dainty Belleau', and the epithet sufficiently expresses the general character of his work

AVRIL

Avril, l'honneur et des bois
Et des mois:
Avril, la douce esperance
Des fruicts qui sous le coton
Du bouton
Nourrissent leur jeune enfance;

Avril, l'honneur des prez verds, Jaunes, pers,¹ Qui d'une humeur bigarree Emaillent de mille fleurs De couleurs Leur parure diapree;

1 bleus.

Avril, l'honneur des soupirs

Des Zephyrs

Qui sous le vent de leur aelle

Dressent encor és

forests

Des doux rets,

Pour ravir Flore la belle;

Avril, c'est ta douce main,

Qui du sein

De la nature desserre

Une moisson de senteurs,

Et de fleurs,

Embasmant 3 l'Air et la Terre.

Avril, la grace et le ris
De Cypris,
Le flair et la douce haleine 4:
Avril, le parfum des Dieux,
Qui des Cieux
Sentent l'odeur de la plaine:

C'est toy courtois et gentil,
Qui d'exil
Retires ces passageres,
Ces arondelles ⁵ qui vont,
Et qui sont
Du printemps les messageres.

L'aubespine et l'aiglantin
Et le thym,
L'œillet, le lis, et les roses,
En cette belle saison
A foison

Monstrent leurs robes écloses.

¹ aile. en les. ³ embaumant. Cypris is Venus. See note 5 on next page.

sc. de Cypris.

Le gentil rossignolet
Doucelet ¹
Decoupe dessous l'ombrage

Mille fredons babillars,
Fretillars.²

Fretillars,²

Au doux chant de son ramage.

Tu vois en ce temps nouveau L'essaim beau

De ces pillardes avettes ³ Volleter de fleur en fleur,

Pour l'odeur

Qu'ils mussent 4 en leurs cuissettes.

May vantera ses fraischeurs,
Ses fruicts meurs,
Et sa féconde rosee,
La manne et le sucre doux,
Le miel roux,
Dont sa grace est arrosee.

Mais moy je donne ma voix
A ce mois
Qui prend le surnom de celle
Qui de l'escumeuse mer
Veit ⁵ germer
Sa naissance maternelle. ⁶

1 Diminutive of doux.

³ abeilles (dim. from Lat. apis). ⁴ cachent. ⁵ in Mod. French voit.

^{2 &#}x27;Warbles a thousand babbling, quivering flourishes,

⁶ Ovid calls May mensis cythereius, 'Cytherea's month', as sacred to Venus, whom the Greeks fabled to have sprung from the foam of the sea (l'escumeuse mer), whence her Greek name, Aphrodite. Belleau would seem, wrongly, of course, to have derived April from this latter name.

CHAPTER III

THE HUGUENOT POETS

GUILLAUME DE SALLUSTE DU BARTAS (1544-90), born near Auch in Gascony, embraced the reformed religion, and was gentleman in ordinary to the Huguenot King of Navarre, afterwards Henri IV. Poet and student by taste, he became a diplomat and soldier in the service of his master, was employed by him on various diplomatic missions in Denmark, Scotland, and England, and fought for him at Ivry (1590), dying of his wounds.

He chose by preference religious subjects for his poems, which include La Semaine, ou la Création en sept journées; Uranie; Judith; Le Triomphe de la foi; Les Neuf Muses; Histoire de Jonas; La Seconde Semaine (from the Old Testament); and

a Cantique sur la bataille d'Ivru.

The success of his first Semaine was immense; edition followed edition, and it was translated into several languages. Ronsard, punning on the title, said that Du Bartas had done more in a week than he himself in all his life. But its continued success, not only with the Calvinists, who opposed it to the poetry of Ronsard himself, but even with the Catholics, made Ronsard tremble for his glory. Du Bartas' enemies sneered at it as 'the story of the Creation as told by a Gascon'.

Du Bartas has a vigorous imagination and a picturesque and forceful style which tends to exaggeration. His imitation of Greek compounds, in violation of the genius of the French language, and certain extravagances in imitative harmony con-

stitute serious flaws in his style.

These flaws, and a general unconformity in the unrestrained riot of his imagination with the staider French taste, have injured his reputation with his countrymen. But with the Teutonic nations, less sensitive to his errors of taste in language and more in sympathy with the unbridled flights of his imagination, sharers too in his religious views, his success has been more enduring. He has the honour of being one of the sources of inspiration of Milton in the Paradise Lost; Jeremy Taylor, Tom Moore, and Byron are touched by his influence, and Goethe eulogizes him in no measured terms.

THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT

Un jour, de comble en fond les rochers crouleront, Les monts plus sourcilleux de peur se dissoudront: Au contraire, ce jour les plus basses campagnes, Boursouflées, croistront en superbes montagnes: Les fleuves tariront: et si dans quelque estang Reste encor quelque flot, ce ne sera que sang; La mer deviendra flamme, et les sèches balenes, Horribles, mugleront sur les cuites arenes. En son midy plus clair le jour s'espaissira, Le ciel d'un fer rouillé sa face voilera: Sur les Astres plus clairs courra le bleu Neptune, Phoebus s'emparera du noir char de la Lune. Les estoilles cherront 1. Le désordre, la nuict, La fraveur, le trespas, la tempeste, le bruict, Entreront en quartier, et l'ire 2 vengeresse Du juge criminel, qui jà dejà 3 nous presse, De tout cet univers ne fera qu'un bucher Comme au temps de Noé il n'en fit qu'une mer.

C'est alors, c'est alors, ô Dieu, que ton Fils cher, Qui semble estre affublé d'une fragile chair, Descendra glorieux des voûtes estoilées. A ses flancs voleront mille bandes ailées, Et son char triomphal, d'esclairs environné, Par Amour et Justice en bas sera traîné. Ceux qu'un marbre orgueilleux presse dessous sa lame 4, Ceux que l'onde engloutit, ceux que la rouge flame Esparpille par l'air: ceux qui n'ont pour tombeaux Que les ventres gloutons des loups ou des corbeaux,

¹ Future of choir. 2 la colère (Lat. ira). ³ 'at this very instant'. An imitation of the Lat. jam jam.
⁴ pierre sépulcrale.

Éveillez ¹, reprendront, comme par inventaire, Leurs peaux, leurs chairs, leurs os, orront ², devant la chaire

De cil qui, souverain, juge en dernier ressort, L'arrest deffinitif ou de vie ou de mort.

THÉODORE AGRIPPA D'AUBIGNÉ (1550-1630) was the son of a zealous adherent of the reformed faith, which already in his early years had its martyrs in France. A Huguenot plot, known as the conspiracy of Amboise (1560), which had aimed at kidnapping the young King in order to withdraw him from the influence of his Catholic counsellors, was punished with merciless rigour. The young d'Aubigné, then scarcely ten years old, swore an oath to his father's dictation before the gibbeted bodies of the victims not to spare his own head in the avenging of them, and well did he keep his oath. Condemned to the stake shortly afterwards for refusing to renounce his religion, he braved his persecutors with the words: 'L'horreur de la messe m'ôte celle du feu.' Delivered by a gentleman who kept him nominally in captivity. really in safe shelter from the fanaticism of his foes, he fled to the wars in his shirt, mounted behind a Huguenot captain, and distinguished himself at the siege of Orléans. On his father's death he went to Geneva, the centre of the reformed faith, to study under the Protestant theologian Théodore de Bèze, after which we find him fighting under the standard of the Huguenot leader. Condé. A timely duel, which compelled him to flee from Paris three days before the massacre of St. Bartholomew, saved him from the fate which overtook so many of his co-religionists. He attached himself to the Huguenot King Henry of Navarre, then a prisoner in the Louvre, and appeared for a time in the rôle of a Court poet, a rhymer of masquerades and elegant trifles, which reveal a side of his character little in accord with the austere Huguenot zealot of his more enduring writings. In 1575 he escaped from the Louvre with Henry, and thenceforth played a prominent part in the wars of religion which distracted France during the remainder of the century. His friendship with the King of Navarre was at times beclouded, but, to the honour of

¹ The participle éveillés.

entendront (from our, Lat. audire).

Henry's reputation for tolerance, never finally interrupted, by the uncompromising frankness of this French John Knox. Henry's diplomatic renunciation of Protestantism, which gave peace to the distracted country and won for himself that Paris which was 'well worth a mass', was a bitter pill for his staunch Huguenot adherent. 'Sire,' he said to him once, when Henry was showing him how his lips had been pierced by the dagger of a would-be assassin, 'Sire, yous n'avez encore renoncé à Dieu que des lèvres, et il s'est contenté de les percer; mais si vous le renoncez un jour du cœur, alors il percera le cœur.' Tracked like a wild beast during part of his life, a score of times made prisoner and wounded a score of times, he was ever ready to fight for his cause with sword, with pen, or with the weapon of conspiracy: he was four times condemned to death, which did not hinder him from dving quietly in his bed at the ripe age of eighty vears. His greatest grief was the apostasy to Catholicism of his son, who afterwards became the father of Mme de Maintenon, the wife, by a secret marriage, of Louis XIV.

As a poet he was a disciple and admirer of Ronsard. His copious works include an Histoire universelle: the satirical Aventures du baron de Fæneste; Petites œuvres mêlées, en prose et en vers : Histoire secrète de Th.-A. d'Aubigné écrite par lui-même et adressée à ses enfants; and in particular Les Tragiques, which in spite of inequalities and flaws of style is a masterpiece of invective, directed against the Catholic enemies of his faith. In the first canto, Misères, he portrays the unhappy condition of his country during the wars of religion; the second, Princes, is a satire on the Court of the Valois: Chambre dorée satirizes the corrupt magistracy, Feux treats of the Protestants condemned to the stake, Fers (i.e. 'swords', not 'fetters') treats of the battles and massacres, whilst in the cantos entitled respectively Vengeances and Jugements he calls down on his enemies and on the enemies of his faith the punishment of God on this earth and at the day of Judgement. To find a parallel to this work in French we must come down to the Châtiments of Victor Hugo, which it irresistibly suggests. Now he heaps opprobrium on his adversaries with the frank coarseness of a Juvenal; now his indignation. kindled to a white heat by the persecution and martyrdom of his co-religionists, finds to denounce their persecutors the sublime and burning language of an old Hebrew prophet. If

France in Du Bartas narrowly missed having her Milton, in d'Aubigné Calvinism as narrowly missed having its Dante.

The fact that the *Tragiques*, though written in the full tide of the persecutions, whilst their author was suffering not alone from the mental but even from the bodily wounds which he bore for his cause, were nevertheless not published until the next century, tended for a time to obscure their real greatness. The Edict of Nantes had done much to appease religious rancours, and Malherbe's reform had rendered the defects of style of the poem intolerable to a more refined taste. But it would now be generally admitted that in the *Tragiques* France came perhaps nearer than she ever has done to having that great epic with which it has been the aspiration of poet after poet to endow her literature, and for which she still waits in vain.

THE EXECUTION OF LADY JANE GRAY

Les mains qui la paraient la parèrent encore :
La grâce et son honneur quand la mort la dévore
N'abandonnent son front ; elle prend le bandeau :
Par la main on l'amène embrasser le poteau :
Elle demeure seule en agneau dépouillée :
La lame du bourreau de son sang fut mouillée ;
L'âme s'envole en haut ; les anges gracieux
Dans le sein d'Abraham la ravirent aux cieux.

(Les Tragiques, Chant IV.)

'AVENGE, O LORD, THY SLAUGHTERED SAINTS,'

Tu vois, juste vengeur, les fleaux ¹ de ton Eglise Qui, par eux mise en cendre et en masure mise, A, contre tout espoir, son espérance en toi, Pour son retranchement, le rempart de la foi.

Les temples du payen, du Turc, de l'idolâtre, Haussent dedans le ciel et le marbre et l'albâtre;

¹ Here one syllable.

Et Dieu seul, au désert ¹ pauvrement hébergé, A basti tout le monde et n'y est pas logé! Les moineaux ont leurs nids, leurs nids les hirondelles; On dresse quelque fuye aux simples colombelles, Tout est mis à l'abri par le soin des mortels, Et Dieu, seul immortel, n'a logis ni autels.

Nous faisons des rochers ¹ les lieux où l'on te presche, Un temple de l'estable, un autel de la creche; Eux,² du temple une estable aux asnes arrogants, De la saincte maison la caverne aux brigands.

Les premiers des chrestiens prioient aux cimetières : Nous avons faict ouïr aux tombeaux nos prières, Faict sonner aux tombeaux le nom de Dieu le fort, Et annoncé la vie aux logis de la mort.

En ces lieux caverneux tes chères assemblées, Des ombres de la mort incessamment troublées, Ne feront-elles plus resonner tes saincts lieux Et ton renom voler des terres dans les cieux?

. .

Quoi! serons-nous muets, serons-nous sans oreilles, Sans mouvoir, sans chanter, sans ouïr tes merveilles? As-tu esteint en nous ton sanctuaire? Non, De nos temples vivans sortira ton renom.

Tel est en cet estat le tableau de l'Eglise: Elle a les fers aux pieds, sur les gehennes³ assise, A sa gorge la corde et le fer inhumain, Un pseaume dans la bouche et un luth en la main.

¹ The Huguenots, like the Covenanters, were driven to worship in lonely places. Cf. next verse but one.

² i.e. the Catholics.

³ i.e. gênes, 'instruments of torture'. Gêner, originally 'to torture', from 'Gehenna', now, from a weakening of sense arising out of its use in hyperbolical expressions, means simply to 'inconvenience'.

Mets à couvert ces voix que les pluies enrouent; Deschaîne donc ces doigts, que sur ton luth ils jouent; Tire nos yeux ternis des cachots ennuyeux, Et nous montre le ciel pour y tourner les yeux.

Que ceux qui ont fermé les yeux à nos misères, Que ceux qui n'ont point eu d'oreille à nos prières, De cœur pour secourir, mais bien pour tourmenter, Point de main pour donner, mais bien pour nous oster,

Trouvent tes yeux fermez à juger leurs misères; Ton oreille soit sourde en oyant leurs prières; Ton sein ferré soit clos aux pitiéz, aux pardons; Ta main sèche, sterile aux bienfaicts et aux dons.

Soient tes yeux clair-voiants à leurs pechez extrêmes, Soit ton oreille ouverte à leurs cris de blasphêmes, Ton sein deboutonné pour s'enfler de courroux, Et ta main diligente à redoubler tes coups.

Ils ont pour un spectacle et pour jeu le martyre; Le meschant rit plus haut que le bon n'y souspire; Nos cris mortels n'y font qu'incommoder leurs ris, Leurs ris de qui l'esclat oste l'air à nos cris.

Ils crachent vers la lune, et les voûtes celestes N'ont-elles plus de foudre et de feux et de pestes? Ne partiront jamais du throsne où tu te sieds Et la Mort et l'Enfer qui dorment à tes pieds?

Leve ton bras de fer, haste tes pieds de laine; ¹ Venge ta patience en l'aigreur de la peine; ² Frappe du ciel Babel: les cornes de son front Defigurent la terre et luy ostent son rond.'

i.e. 'soft', 'tardy'.
ighthauper's 'By the severity of the punishment'.

CHAPTER IV

MONTAIGNE

MICHEL EYQUEM DE MONTAIGNE (1533-92) was born in the Castle of Montaigne, in Périgord. He came of a family which had grown rich by trade at Bordeaux during the English domination in Guvenne, and had acquired nobility by the purchase by his grandfather of the estate of Montaigne, from which the essavist took the name which he was to make famous. His father, who had original ideas upon education, transferred him straight from his nurse's arms into the charge of a tutor, with the injunction that all his intercourse with the child should be in Latin, and took care to facilitate obedience to this injunction by his choice for a tutor of a German who was himself unable to speak French. Moreover, no pains were spared to surround the child with an atmosphere of Latin. 'Quant au reste de la maison, c'estoit une reigle inviolable que ny luy mesme [i.e. Montaigne's father]. ny ma mere, ny valet, ny chambriere, ne parloient en ma compaignie qu'autant de mots de latin que chascun avoit apprins pour iargonner avec moy.' The whole neighbourhood was so infected with Latin for the benefit of the squire's son that, so Montaigne tells us, certain Latin names of artisans and tools took root amongst the common people and lived on during his manhood. Latin was thus, rather than French, his mother tongue, that in which in after life, on the occasion of sudden and violent emotions, he instinctively gave first expression to his feelings. Thus, when in his seventh year he was placed in the College of Guyenne, his command of Latin was such that even his masters were afraid to engage him in that language. It is interesting to note that amongst other able teachers Montaigne had as master at the College of Guyenne the learned Scotchman, George Buchanan, perhaps the most distinguished Latinist of his age, and afterwards tutor of James I of England. In the Latin plays of

Buchanan, produced at the College of Guvenne, Montaigne had the honour of playing the foremost parts. Having completed his school studies at the age of twelve, he read for the har, and about 1556 received an official post in the local law courts in succession to his father. During this period was formed the friendship with La Boétie, whose untimely death in 1563, cutting short a career of the greatest promise, shook Montaigne strangely out of the indifference of his sceptical philosophy, and called forth from him an eloquent tribute to the memory of his deceased friend. He married in 1565, and had several children, of whom one only, a daughter, survived him. In 1570, the death of his father and his elder brothers having left him head of the family. he quitted the law courts, where, especially after the death of his friend, he found little to attach his interest. His first literary labours were suggested by his filial affection and his loyalty to the memory of his friend. He had promised his father to put into French a work of Raymond de Sebonde, a Spanish theologian, on natural theology. This promise he redeemed. A defence of this writer was destined afterwards to be incorporated with his Essaus, and to form the very key to his system of philosophy. Then he busied himself with the publication of certain translations and Latin and French verses of La Boétie, preceded by dedications in which he sought to vindicate the titles of his friend to that fame which his early death had alone hindered him from achieving. He was now free to follow the bent of his own inclinations. At first dividing his time between Paris and his country seat, he was in 1576 appointed gentleman in ordinary of the king's chamber, and later likewise of the chamber of the King of Navarre. He was employed in diplomatic negotiations between the Duke of Guise and the King of Navarre, and experienced the life of a soldier in the unhappy religious wars which devastated France, and particularly his own province. Between 1571 and 1580, living a cloistered life amongst his books, in the retreat which he has himself described for us. 1 he wrote the first two books of his Essays, which appeared in 1580. Whilst travelling for his health in Switzerland, Germany and Italy, he was recalled to Bordeaux by the news of his election as mayor of that city, an honour he would fain have declined, but which the

¹ See Extract, p. 207.

intervention of Henri III constrained him to accept. He acquitted himself so well of his duties that he was re-elected for a second term of two years. The period of his second mayoralty was agitated by the distractions of religious and civic discord. and its termination was marked by a terrible visitation of the plague at Bordeaux. In the general flight which ensued, Montaigne, occupied in taking his family to a place of safety, signified his own willingness to return if his presence were considered necessary, but manifestly hoped that it would not be so considered. In 1588 a new edition of the Essays appeared, including, in addition to a revised version of the first two books, a third book which was entirely new. Whilst in Paris supervising its publication, he was arrested on the day of the 'Barricades', and imprisoned for some hours in the Bastille. In this same year he was present at the meeting of the States-General at Blois, when the Duke of Guise and his brother were treacherously murdered. Montaigne died in 1592, during the celebration of mass in his sick-chamber, at the very moment of the elevation of the Host. A new edition of his Essays, incorporating modifications and additions left by the author in manuscript, was published in 1595, largely by the care of Mlle de Gournay, whose devoted admiration for Montaigne, conceived from the reading of the Essays, fell like a ray of warmth in his last years and ripened into a filial affection which justified him in styling her his fille d'alliance. We further possess of Montaigne a number of letters and a journal of his voyage to Italy through Switzerland and Germany in 1580-1.

Montaigne's philosophy of life, at which he arrives from the innumerable wavering and conflicting opinions of men with which he is confronted in his reading and his experience, is a tolerant scepticism as to the power of men to attain to truth, which is expressed in his device, a balance with equally poised scale-pans, and in his motto, Que sçais-je? His practical conclusion is an optimistic Epicureanism, a cheerful acceptance of and interest in life as it is, unclouded by metaphysical brooding, and in matters doubtful conforming to the received opinion. At a time when the tide of civil and religious faction ran high, and issued in crime and bloodshed, Montaigne's negative philosophy had at least the positive virtue that it made for tolerance. It has since been variously judged, according to the spirit of successive critics and ages, but the charm of his discursive style, with its highly

frank personal revelations, its easy and perfect assimilation of the most varied classical learning, and its graceful and picturesque—yet withal nervous—language, has never failed of its appeal to all sorts and conditions of men in all the ages that have followed him.

SELECTED EXTRACTS FROM THE ESSAYS

Nothing bad but thinking makes it so.

L'aysance donc et l'indigence dependent de l'opinion d'un chascun; et non plus la richesse que la gloire, que la santé, n'ont qu'autant de beauté et de plaisir que leur en preste celuy qui les possede. Chascun est bien ou mal, selon qu'il s'en treuve: non de qui on le croid, mais qui le croid de sov, est content ; et en cela seul la creance se donne essence et verité. La fortune ne nous faict ny bien ny mal; elle nous en offre seulement la matiere et la semence : laquelle nostre ame, plus puissante qu'elle, tourne et applique comme il luy plaist; seule cause et maistresse de sa condition heureuse ou malheureuse. Les accessions externes prennent saveur et couleur de l'interne constitution : comme les accoustrements nous eschauffent, non de leur chaleur, mais de la nostre, laquelle ils sont propres à couver et nourrir; qui en abrieroit 1 un corps froid, il en tireroit mesme service pour la froideur : ainsi se conserve la neige et la glace. Certes, tout en la maniere qu'à un faineant l'estude sert de torment; à un yvrongne, l'abstinence du vin; la frugalité est supplice au luxurieux : et l'exercice, gehenne 2 à un homme delicat et oysif; ainsin est il du reste. Les choses ne sont pas si douloureuses ny difficiles

¹ abriterait. 'if one should shelter with them.'
² 'torture'. Cf. note 3, p. 199.

d'elles mesmes; mais nostre foiblesse et lascheté les faict telles. Pour iuger des choses grandes et haultes, il fault une ame de mesme; aultrement nous leur attribuons le vice qui est le nostre: un aviron droict semble courbe en l'eau; il n'importe pas seulement qu'on veoye la chose, mais comment on la veoid.

And then?

Quand le roy Pyrrhus ¹ entreprenoit de passer en Italie, Cineas, son sage conseiller, luy voulant faire sentir la vanité de son ambition : 'Eh bien! sire, luy demanda il, à quelle fin dressez vous cette grande entreprinse? — Pour me faire maistre de l'Italie,' respondit il soubdain. 'Et puis, suyvit Cineas, cela faict? — Ie passeray, dict l'aultre, en Gaule et en Espaigne. — Et aprez? — Ie m'en iray subiuguer l'Afrique; et enfin, quand i'auray mis le monde en ma subiection, ie me reposeray, et vivray content et à mon ayse. — Pour dieu, sire, rechargea lors Cineas, dictes-moy à quoy il tient que vous ne soyez dez à present, si vous voulez, en cet estat? pourquoy ne vous logez vous dez cette heure où vous dictes aspirer, et vous espargnez tant de travail et de hazard, que vous iectez entre deux ²?'

Man's Presumption.

Considerons doncques pour cette heure l'homme seul, sans secours estrangier, armé seulement de ses armes, et despourveu de la grace et cognoissance divine, qui est tout son honneur, sa force, et le fondement de son estre : veoyons combien il a de tenue en ce bel equippage. Qu'il me face entendre, par l'effort de son discours, sur quels

2 'in between.'

¹ The anecdote is from Plutarch's Life of Pyrrhus.

fondements il a basty ces grands advantages qu'il pense avoir sur les aultres creatures. Qui luy a persuadé que ce bransle admirable de la voulte celeste, la lumiere eternelle de ces flambeaux roulants si fierement sur sa teste, les mouvements espoyentables de cette mer infinie. sovent establis, et se continuent tant de siecles, pour sa commodité et pour son service ? Est il possible de rien imaginer si ridicule, que cette miserable et chestifve creature, qui n'est pas seulement maistresse de sov, exposee aux offenses de toutes choses, se die 1 maistresse et emperiere de l'univers, duquel il n'est pas en sa puissance de cognoistre la moindre partie, tant s'en fault de la commander? Et ce privilege qu'il s'attribue d'estre seul en ce grand bastiment qui avt la suffisance d'en recognoistre la beauté et les pieces, seul qui en puisse rendre graces à l'architecte, et tenir compte de la recepte et mise du monde ; qui luy a scellé ce privilege ? . . . La presumption est nostre maladie naturelle et originelle. La plus calamiteuse et fragile de toutes les creatures, c'est l'homme, et quand et quand la plus orgueilleuse: elle se sent et se veoid logee ici parmy la bourbe et le fient du monde, attachee et clouee à la pire, plus morte et croupie partie de l'univers, au dernier estage du logis et le plus esloingné de la voulte celeste, avecques les animaulx de la pire condition des trois; et se va plantant, par imagination, au dessus du cercle de la lune, et ramenant le ciel soubs ses pieds. C'est par la vanité de cette mesme imagination qu'il s'éguale à Dieu, qu'il s'attribue les conditions divines, qu'il se trie soy mesme et separe de la presse des aultres creatures, taille les parts aux animaulx ses confreres et compaignons, et leur distribue telle portion de facultez et de forces que bon luy semble.

Comment cognoist il, par l'effort de son intelligence, les bransles internes et secrets des animaulx ? par quelle comparaison d'eulx à nous conclud il la bestise qu'il leur attribue ? Quand ie me ioue à ma chatte, qui sçait si elle passe son temps de moy, plus que ie ne fois d'elle ? nous nous entretenons de singeries reciproques : si i'ay mon heure de commencer ou de refuser, aussi a elle la sienne.

Montaigne in his Library.

Chez moy, ie me destourne un peu plus souvent à ma librairie, d'où, tout d'une main, ie commande à mon mesnage. Ie suis sur l'entree, et veois soubs moy mon iardin, ma bassecourt, ma court, et dans la plus part des membres de ma maison. Là ie feuillette à cette heure un livre, à cette heure un aultre, sans ordre et sans desseing, à pieces descousues : tantost ie resve : tantost i'enregistre et dicte, en me promenant, mes songes que voicy. Elle est au troisesme estage d'une tour : le premier, c'est ma chapelle; le second, une chambre et sa suitte, où ie me couche souvent, pour estre seul; au dessus, elle a une grande garderobbe : c'estoit, au temps passé, le lieu le plus inutile de ma maison. Ie passe là et la plus part des iours de ma vie et la plus part des heures du iour : ie n'v suis iamais la nuit. A sa suitte est un cabinet assez poly, capable à recevoir du feu pour l'hyver, trèsplaisamment percé 1: et si ie ne craignois non plus le soing que la despense, le soing qui me chasse de toute besongne, i'v pourrois facilement couldre à chasque costé une gallerie de cent pas de long et douze de large, à plain pied, ayant trouvé touts les murs montez, pour aultre usage, à la haulteur qu'il me fault. Tout lieu retiré requiert un promenoir; mes pensees dorment, si ie les

¹ sc. for a window.

assis: mon esprit ne va pas seul, comme si les iambes l'agitent : ceulx qui estudient sans livre, en sont touts là. La figure en est ronde, et n'a de plat que ce qu'il fault à ma table et à mon siege : et vient m'offrant, en se courbant, d'une veue, touts mes livres, rengez sur des pulpitres à cinq degres tout à l'environ. Elle a trois veues de riche et libre prospect, et seize pas de vuide 1 en diametre. En hyver, i'v suis moins continuellement: car ma maison est juchee sur un tertre, comme dict son nom.2 et n'a point de piece plus esventee que cette cv, qui me plaist d'estre un peu penible et à l'escart, tant pour le fruict de l'exercice, que pour reculer de moy la presse. C'est là mon siege: i'essave à m'en rendre la domination pure, et à soustraire ce seul coing à la communauté et conjugale, et filiale, et civile; par tout ailleurs ie n'av qu'une auctorité verbale, en essence, confuse. Miserable à mon gré, qui n'a chez sov, où estre à sov: où se faire particulierement la court : où se cacher !

Princely Magnanimity.

Iacques Amyot, grand aumosnier de France, me recita un iour cette histoire à l'honneur d'un prince des nostres,...que durant nos premiers troubles,³ au siege de Rouan, ce prince ayant esté adverti, par la royne mere du roy, d'une entreprinse qu'on faisoit sur sa vie, et instruict particulierement, par ses lettres, de celuy qui la debvoit conduire à chef, qui estoit un gentilhomme angevin, ou manceau, frequentant lors ordinairement pour cet effect la maison de ce prince, il ne communiqua

¹ vide, i.e. espace.

² i.e. Montaigne, the mountain. The lesser nobility in France, like the Scotch 'lairds', took their names from their estates.

³ The Wars of Religion, between Huguenots and Catholics. Henry of Navarre besieged Rouen in 1590, after Ivry.

à personne cet advertissement: mais se promenant l'endemain au mont Saincte Catherine, d'où se faisoit nostre batterie à Rouan (car c'estoit au temps que nous la tenions assiegee), avant à ses costez ledit seigneur grand aumosnier et un aultre evesque, il apperceut ce gentilhomme qui luy avoit esté remarqué, et le feit appeller. Comme il feut en sa presence, il luv dict ainsi, le veovant desia paslir et fremir des alarmes de sa conscience : 'Monsieur de tel lieu, vous vous doubtez bien de ce que ie vous veulx, et vostre visage le montre. Vous n'avez rien à me cacher : car ie suis instruict de votre affaire si avant, que vous ne feriez qu'empirer vostre marché d'essaver à le couvrir. Vous scavez bien telle chose et telle (qui estovent les tenants et aboutissants des plus secretes pieces de cette menee): ne faillez, sur vostre vie, à me confesser la verité de tout ce desseing.' Quand ce pauvre homme se trouva prins et convaincu (car le tout avoit esté descouvert à la royne par l'un des complices), il n'eut qu'à ioindre les mains et requerir la grace et misericorde de ce prince, aux pieds duquel il se voulut iecter; mais il l'en garda, suyvant ainsi son propos: 'Venez ça: vous av ie aultrefois faict desplaisir? av ie offensé quelqu'un des vostres par haine particuliere? Il n'y a pas trois semaines que ie vous cognov: quelle raison vous a peu mouvoir à entreprendre ma mort?' Le gentilhomme respondit à cela, d'une voix tremblante, que ce n'estoit aulcune occasion particuliere qu'il en eust, mais l'interest de la cause generale de son party, et qu'aulcuns luy avoient persuadé que ce seroit une execution pleine de pieté, d'extirper, en quelque maniere que ce feust, un si puissant ennemy de leur religion. 'Or, suyvit ce prince, ie vous veulx montrer combien la religion que ie tiens est plus doulce que celle dequoy vous faictes profession. La vostre vous a conseillé de me tuer sans m'ouïr, n'ayant receu de moy aulcune offense; et la mienne me commande que ie vous pardonne, tout convaincu ¹ que vous estes de m'avoir voulu tuer sans raison. Allez vous en, retirez vous; que ie ne vous veoye plus icy: et si vous estes sage, prenez doresnavant en vos entreprinses des conseillers plus gents de bien ² que ceulx là.'

^{1 &#}x27;convicted.'

² gens de bien, upright people.

BOOK III.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN LIBERTY AND AUTHORITY

INTRODUCTION

THE Classical Period lies between two periods of The question at issue was the same in The first, which we are now to consider, decided in favour of order and authority in letters. as against individualism and liberty. The second, after the lapse of two centuries, reversed by the success of the Romantic revolution the decision of the former.

During the first half of the seventeenth century Foreign French literature swayed hither and thither under influvarious influences. The study and imitation of the classical writers inaugurated by the Renaissance continued to play a predominant rôle. To it were added Italian and Spanish influences, arising out of foreign marriages and foreign wars. Both contributed to give the language a dangerous turn towards affectation, which indeed, running riot on the morrow of the Renaissance through all European literatures, in France as préciosité, in Italy in the abuse of metaphors known as concetti, in Spain as gongorism, and in England as euphuism, would seem to have been the crude first-fruits of the newlyawakened sense of style. With this affectation of refinement in speech went a corresponding affectation of gallantry in manners, equally an ingredient in préciosité, derived from Italian and Spanish

pastorals and Spanish romances of chivalry. Introduced into France by the pastoral romance of D'Urfé, L'Astrée, it ran its course in the interminable allegorical romances of M^{11e} de Scudéry, Le Grand Cyrus and Clélie. From the realistic picaresque romances of Spain, novels of vagabondage, there derived a series of realistic novels, which culminated in the following century in the masterpiece of Gil Blas. In like manner the super-refined gallantry of the précieux provoked by a natural reaction the fleeting apparition in French poetry of the burlesque, whose most notable representative was the Virgile travesti of Scarron. In these two pairs of opposing tendencies there meets us again the conflict between high-flown idealism and gross realism with which we have already been confronted in mediaeval literature.

Native influences.

Of the native influences which contributed to mould the destinies of French literature at this time, some emanated from individuals, others were exercised through corporations. Chief among the former were the reforms inaugurated by Malherbe in language and versification, the models of a prosestyle furnished by Balzac, and the bias imparted to the whole thought of the century, in letters no less than in science, by the philosophical writings of Descartes.

Reforms of Malherbe. The innovations of the past century had flooded the language with a host of ill-assimilated words of Greek and Latin origin, and the Parisian basis itself of the language was threatened with submersion by provincial elements. There was in fact no accepted standard. Malherbe set himself to create one, weeding out with merciless hand the incongruent elements which made a patchwork of the written language, and establishing the usages of the spoken language of Paris, or, as he expressed it with humorous exaggeration, of the 'porters of the hay-wharf'. He waged bitter war against all looseness of expres-

sion, and was the sworn foe of all facile versification. He hedged in poetry within a thorny ring-fence of technique, banning trite or obvious rhymes, proscribing hiatus and overflow, and prescribing the median caesura in the Alexandrine. In the higher qualities which go to the making of a great poet. in liveliness of imagination and niceness of sensibility, he was strikingly deficient. His poetical inspiration was innocent of any 'fine frenzy'. He was an artificer in words, not a creative genius. He left a few models all but perfect in harmony and precision of expression, but made little, if any, contribution to the sum of human ideas. Yet the passion for perfection of form which he inculcated remained the abiding stamp of the classical school.

The authority of Malherbe was not undisputed Disciples in his own day. He had indeed his disciples, and Opamongst whom Racan has a truer natural lyric gift of Mal. than his master, a tender grace and picturesque herbe. melancholy which would rather class him with the school of Ronsard, and a very unclassical sympathy with nature. But most of Malherbe's contemporaries remained indifferent, and some were bitterly hostile, to the reforms which he inaugurated. Chief amongst the free-lances may be mentioned the

satirist Régnier and Théophile de Viau.

What Malherbe did for French poetry, that Balzac Balzac did for French prose. Like Malherbe in cha- and racter, unoriginal, unimaginative, unemotional, but French Prose. self-confident and imperious, he exercised a like influence on letters. He did nothing to mould the thought of men, but much to mould the instrument of language and render it fitter to express the thoughts of more original minds. His letters, looked forward to as events in literary circles, were models of pure French prose, whose somewhat pompous eloquence disguised the real meagreness or banality

of the thoughts which they conveyed. His style was greatly indebted to the prose of Cicero, whose rolling periods he transfers with success to a language in which hitherto the periodic style, when not slipshod, had tended to be unduly involved. In certain tricks of style, in excessive fondness for metaphor and hyperbole, and for the rhythmic balance of antithesis, he reminds us strongly of our Elizabethan euphuists. His influence has been summed up as wittily as accurately in the saying that he 'put French through her course of rhetoric'.

Descartes and the Cult of Reason.

Whilst Malherbe and Balzac left their traces almost exclusively upon the language, the philosophical ideas of Descartes largely contributed to shape the very soul and spirit of classicism. His exclusive devotion to 'reason', that sublimated common-sense which is one and the same in all men, his profound distrust of imagination and feeling, which vary from individual to individual, and from time to time in the same individual, these are the root-principles of neo-classicism. They did not first appear in French literature with Descartes. They existed in germ in the Renaissance, they put forth strong shoots in Malherbe; it is manifest that they found a congenial soil in the French mind. But Descartes summarized and systematized them. It was in his school that French classicism contracted its inveterate habit of analysis, and that it learned to eliminate from its presentment of life the individual, the accidental, the concrete, and to confine itself to the portraval of the universal, the essential, the abstract. This cult of 'reason', with its devotion to abstract truth, like some strong growing plant, overshadowing and robbing of their due share of nutriment the more delicate blossoms of the imagination and the feelings, overspread the garden of French literature, until in the eighteenth century, in the purely intellectual 'literature of

ideas' of the philosophes, it had the ground entirely to itself

Under the influences of a more corporate nature which contributed at this time to give the turn to French literature, we have to consider the Hôtel de

Rambouillet and the French Academy.

The early seventeenth century saw the establishment of the first of those literary salons which were to become one of the most characteristic features of seventeenth and eighteenth-century France, and which have so largely contributed to impress upon the literature of that country the character of the society as a whole in whose bosom it had its origin. In the Hôtel de Rambouillet all that was most brilliant Hôtel de in the society of the time, whether by nobility of Rambirth, literary distinction, or eminence in states-bouillet. manship, was gathered together under the presidency of the charming and gifted hostess, the Marquise de Rambouillet. Only in individual cases in the past had men of letters been admitted to aristocratic society, and then in a capacity little removed from that of the menial. The society they had kept hitherto had been Bohemian, and their writings, in the words of Boileau, had only too often 'smacked of the places they haunted'. Now they rubbed elbows on a footing not far removed from equality with the highest in the land. Both benefited. The aristocracy condescended to an interest in things intellectual, and literature gained a refinement it had hitherto lacked. If French 'studied its rhetoric' under Balzac, Rambouillet House was its 'school of deportment'. Its influence was as salutary as it was far-reaching. Only in its later days, and especially through its unaristocratic imitators, did its refinement degenerate into that prudishness in manners and affectation in speech which, under the name of préciosité, threatened for a time to overwhelm the simplicity and sincerity of

the classical school beneath a flood of artificiality, and which Molière scotched, but did not kill, by the satire of the *Précieuses ridicules*.

The French Academy.

Whilst French literature was acquiring the graces from its contact with refined society in Rambouillet House, the newly-established French Academy taught it to bow to discipline of a more technical character. The Academy had its germ in a series of informal gatherings of the more prominent men of letters of the day. The minister Richelieu got wind of these meetings, and grasped the opportunity to extend to letters the principles of discipline and order which he had made paramount in the State. This informal club was constituted into a permanent official body, a kind of central authority, to watch over the purity of the language and issue authoritative opinions in questions of literature. The influence of the Academy on the language, exercised through the dictionary which it tardily compiled, was naturally strongly conservative. Whether it was for good or evil is a moot point. Its advocates had hoped that it would 'fix' the French language, in the sense in which Latin and Greek are fixed. We now know that no force can stem the current of change in a language, that the only fixity to which it can attain is the fixity of death. But the dictionary of the Academy, whether for good or evil, did undoubtedly make for a relative stability; the stream of change was pretty effectively dammed for a century and a half, until it burst its dam in the Romantic movement.

CHAPTER I

MALHERBE AND HIS SCHOOL

Francois de Malherbe (1555-1628) was born at Caen, of a noble family, and received a careful education. Destined by his family for the magistracy, he elected to follow the profession of arms, and went to Provence in the suite of Henri d'Angoulême, Grand Prior of France. In the year 1605, at the instance of friends who had recommended him for his poetic talents to the King, Henri IV, he settled in Paris. He had married at Aix, in 1581. His domestic history would suggest that he was not a man of strong affections. His wife, Madeleine de Coriolis, was already widowed of two husbands, and was destined to survive himself, after forty-seven years of wedlock. Of her Malherbe never spoke. He left her behind him in Provence when he himself went to Paris, and only saw her again on the occasion of two brief visits. There were three children of the marriage: two died young, the third, a son, was killed in a duel in Malherbe's old age. In his famous Stances à Du Périer, referring to the loss of his younger children, he declares that he has himself been twice smitten by the same bolt which had fallen upon his friend, and twice 'reason' had so schooled him that he no longer remembered the loss. He seems to have felt more keenly the death of his son, whose murderer, as he chose to consider him, he pursued with relentless vengeance. The narrative of his domestic relations is not alien to our subject: it throws an interesting light upon the character of the man who was to make reason, rather than emotion, the presiding genius of lyric poetry. Equally characteristic of the familiar attitude towards nature of the classical school of which he was to be the founder are his confessions when in the Forest of Fontainebleau: 'Et j'y deviens plus sec, plus j'y vois de verdure', and his declaration in a letter to a friend: 'Hors de Paris, il n'y a pas de salut.' In the next century, Dr. Johnson will say much the same thing in other language.

His earlier work, as one might expect of one whom, in the words of a contemporary, 'not genius, but reflection and art had made a poet', gives little promise of future greatness. His Larmes de saint Pierre (1587), imitated from an Italian poet, is an admirable example of those affected graces of style which he was later to castigate with so merciless a hand. But before his transmigration to Paris he had already laid the foundation of his fame in his ode to Henri IV. Sur la prise de Marseille. his Stances à Du Périer, Sur l'arrivée de Marie de Médicis (the bride of Henri IV) en France. Shortly after his arrival in Paris his Prière pour le Roi allant en Limousin established him in favour with the King. Thenceforth he became in effect Poet Laureate to the Court, for the diversion of which in its moments of leisure, or in celebration of great national events, the few poems which he henceforth produced were written. Most often quoted amongst these are his odes Au duc de Bellegarde. Sur la mort de Henri IV, A la Reine mère sur les heureux succès de sa régence, and in particular his ode to Louis XIII. Pour le Roi allant châtier la rébellion des Rochelois, which passes for his masterpiece. A pedagogue, rather than a poet, by nature, his activity in the former capacity made amends for his sluggishness in the latter. Almost every evening he gathered around him in his house a company of disciples, whom he initiated into the art of versification as he himself understood it. The favour he had enjoyed under Henri IV was continued to him by Marie de Médicis and Louis XIII.

Notwithstanding the slenderness of Malherbe's own contributions to poetry, his influence upon the course of French literature was far-reaching. Ronsard indeed it was, though the later classics disclaimed him, who in the generation before Malherbe first turned the feet of the French Muse into the paths of classicism, whilst it was Boileau who in the generation after Malherbe made broad and smooth those paths before her. But it was Malherbe who first taught her to walk therein with firm and stately step. In his Art poétique Boileau, closing with a sigh of relief his perfunctory review of early French poetry, announces as with a flourish of trumpets his entrance upon the scene: 'Enfin Malherbe vint'; and no one since Boileau has thought of contesting his claim to be regarded as the founder of the Classical School.

FRANÇOIS DE MALHERBE

'Sweet rose, fair flower, untimely plucked, soon faded.'
(Consolation à M. du Périer sur la mort de sa fille.')

Ta douleur, du Périer, sera donc éternelle? Et les tristes discours Que te met en l'esprit l'amitié paternelle

L'augmenteront toujours ?

Le malheur de ta fille, au tombeau descendue

Par un commun trépas, Est-ce quelque dédale où ta raison perdue Ne se retrouve pas ?

Je sais de quels appas son enfance était pleine, Et n'ai pas entrepris,

Injurieux ami, de soulager ta peine Avecque son ² mépris.

Mais elle était du monde, où les plus belles choses Ont le pire destin,

Et, rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses, L'espace d'un matin.

La mort a des rigueurs à nulle autre pareilles : On a beau la prier,

La cruelle qu'elle est se bouche les oreilles, Et nous laisse crier.

¹ The poem from which these stanzas are drawn is deservedly that by which Malherbe is best known, the only one of the poet, perhaps, which has a universal appeal. Fourteen stanzas are here omitted, consisting chiefly of a procession of instances of the rigours of death drawn from classical mythology, which leave the reader cold, and only detract from the dignified pathos of the poem.

² i.e. le mépris d'elle; son is objective genitive.

Le pauvre en sa cabane, où le chaume le couvre, Est sujet à ses lois ;

Et la garde qui veille aux barrières du Louvre N'en défend pas nos rois.

De murmurer contre elle et perdre patience Il est mal à propos; Vouloir ce que Dieu veut est la seule science Qui nous met en repos.

CHANSON

'Get up, sweet slug-a-bed!'

Sus debout, la merveille des belles! Allons voir sur les herbes nouvelles Luire un émail, dont la vive peinture Défend à l'art d'imiter la nature.

L'air est plein d'une haleine de roses, Tous les vents tiennent leurs bouches closes, Et le soleil semble sortir de l'onde Pour quelque amour, plus que pour luire au monde.

On dirait, à lui voir sur la tête Ses rayons comme un chapeau de fête, Qu'il s'en va suivre en si belle journée Encore un coup la fille de Pénée.¹

Toute chose aux délices conspire, Mettez-vous en votre humeur de rire; Les soins profonds, d'où les rides nous viennent, A d'autres ans qu'aux vôtres appartiennent.

¹ Daphne, daughter of the river-god Peneus, delivered from the pursuit of Apollo by being changed into a laurel-tree.

Il fait chaud, mais un feuillage sombre Loin du bruit nous fournira quelque ombre, Où nous ferons parmi les violettes Mépris de l'ambre et de ses cassolettes.

Près de nous sur les branches voisines Des genêts, des houx et des épines, Le rossignol, déployant ses merveilles, Jusqu'aux rochers donnera des oreilles.

PARAPHRASE OF PSALM CXLVI

N'espérons plus, mon âme, aux promesses du monde; Sa lumière est un verre, et sa faveur une onde Que toujours quelque vent empêche de calmer. Quittons ces vanités, lassons-nous de les suivre;

C'est Dieu qui nous fait vivre, C'est Dieu qu'il faut aimer.

En vain, pour satisfaire à nos lâches envies, Nous passons près des rois tout le temps de nos vies A souffrir des mépris et ployer les genoux. Ce qu'ils peuvent n'est rien; ils sont comme nous sommes.

Véritablement hommes, Et meurent comme nous.

Ont-ils rendu l'esprit, ce n'est plus que poussière Que cette majesté si pompeuse et si fière Dont l'éclat orgueilleux étonne l'univers; Et dans ces grands tombeaux, où leurs âmes hautaines Font encore les vaines, Ils sont mangés des vers.

Là se perdent ces noms de maîtres de la terre, D'arbitres de la paix, de foudres de la guerre; Comme ils n'ont plus de sceptre, ils n'ont plus de flatteurs ;

Et tombent avec eux d'une chute commune Tous ceux que leur fortune Faisait leurs serviteurs.

HONORAT DE RACAN (1589-1670), a gentleman of Touraine, was page of the King's Chamber, made several campaigns under Louis XIII, lived from 1628 to 1651 as a country gentleman on his estates, enjoying those tranquil delights which he sings with no less sincerity than sweetness in his Stances à Tircis, and only returned to Paris to find himself branded with rusticity and hopelessly behind the times. As page in the service of the Duke of Bellegarde he had made the acquaintance of Malherbe, becoming his devoted disciple, and one of the most assiduous frequenters of his 'school of poetry'. Both poets were habitués of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, and Racan was one of the original members of the French Academy. Knowing no Latin, inspired with a sincere love of nature, touched with a gentle melancholy, and gifted by nature rather than furnished by art with a true lyric gift, Racan was in truth a Romantic straved into the classic fold. Malherbe himself calls him a 'heretic in poetry'. His poems include a pastoral drama, the Bergeries (c. 1618), whose inspiration is drawn from the Italian pastorals and the Astrée of D'Urfé, odes in the manner of Malherbe, and a translation of portions of the Psalms. The Stances à Tircis quoted below show him at his best

STANCES A TIRCIS

'Beatus ille qui procul negotiis.'

Tircis, il faut penser à faire la retraite:
La course de nos jours est plus qu'à demi faite;
L'âge insensiblement nous conduit à la mort.
Nous avons assez vu sur la mer de ce monde
Errer au gré des flots notre nef vagabonde:
Il est temps de jouir des délices du port.

RACAN 223

Le bien de la fortune est un bien périssable; Quand on bâtit sur elle, on bâtit sur le sable. Plus on est élevé, plus on court de dangers; Les grands pins sont en butte aux coups de la tempête, Et la rage des vents brise plutôt le faîte Des maisons de nos rois que les toits des bergers.

O bienheureux celui qui peut de sa mémoire Effacer pour jamais ce vain espoir de gloire Dont l'inutile soin traverse nos plaisirs, Et qui, loin retiré de la foule importune, Vivant dans sa maison, content de sa fortune, A selon son pouvoir mesuré ses désirs!

Il laboure le champ que labourait son père; Il ne s'informe pas de ce qu'on délibère Dans ces graves conseils d'affaires accablés; Il voit sans intérêt la mer grosse d'orages Et n'observe des vents les sinistres présages Que pour le soin qu'il a du salut de ses blés.

Roi de ses passions, il a ce qu'il désire: Son fertile domaine et son petit empire; Sa cabane est son Louvre et son Fontainebleau¹; Ses champs et ses jardins sont autant de provinces, Et, sans porter envie à la pompe des princes, Se contente chez lui de les voir en tableau.

Il voit de toutes parts combler d'heur sa famille, La javelle à plein poing tomber sous la faucille, Le vendangeur ployer sous le faix des paniers; Et semble qu'à l'envi les fertiles montagnes, Les humides vallons et les grasses campagnes S'efforcent à remplir sa cave et ses greniers.

¹ Palaces of the French Kings.

Il suit aucunes fois un cerf par les foulées,¹
Dans ces vieilles forêts du peuple reculées,
Et qui même du jour ignorent le flambeau:²
Aucunes fois des chiens il suit les voix confuses:
Et voit enfin le lièvre, après toutes ses ruses,
Du lieu de sa naissance en faire son tombeau.

Tantôt il se promène au long de ses fontaines, De qui les petits flots font luire dans les plaines L'argent de leurs ruisseaux parmi l'or des moissons: Tantôt il se repose avecque les bergères Sur des lits naturels de mousse et de fougères, Qui n'ont d'autres rideaux que l'ombre des buissons.

Il soupire en repos l'ennui de sa vieillesse, Dans ce même foyer où sa tendre jeunesse A vu dans le berceau ses bras emmaillottés: Il tient par les moissons registre des années Et voit de temps en temps leurs courses enchaînées, Vieillir avecque lui les bois qu'il a plantés.

Il ne va point fouiller aux terres inconnues A la merci des vents et des ondes chenues Ce que Nature avare a caché de trésors: Il ne recherche point, pour honorer sa vie, De plus illustre mort, ni plus digne d'envie, Que de mourir au lit où ses pères sont morts.

Il contemple du port les insolentes rages Des vents de la faveur, auteurs de nos orages, Allumer des mutins les desseins factieux; Et voit en un clin d'œil, par un contraire échange, L'un déchiré du peuple, au milieu de la fange, Et l'autre en même temps élevé dans les cieux.

¹ Faint footprints on grass or leaves. ² le flambeau du jour is the sun.

S'il ne possède pas ces maisons magnifiques, Ces tours, ces chapiteaux, ces superbes portiques Où la magnificence étale ses attraits, Il jouit des beautés qu'ont les saisons nouvelles, Il voit de la verdure et des fleurs naturelles Qu'en ces riches lambris l'on ne voit qu'en portraits.

Agréables déserts, séjour de l'innocence,
Où, loin des vanités, de la magnificence,
Commence mon repos et finit mon tourment,
Vallons, fleuves, rochers, plaisante solitude,
Si vous fûtes témoins de mon inquiétude,
Soyez-le désormais de mon contentement.

CHAPTER II

THE FREE-LANCES

MATHURIN RÉGNIER (1573-1613) was the nephew on his mother's side of Desportes, who, in the latter half of the sixteenth century, by his poetry in the manner of Petrarch and the Italians. and perhaps still more by his address as a courtier, had attained to considerable wealth through the medium of Church preferment. With an eve to securing for him the reversion of one or other of his uncle's benefices. Régnier's parents launched him early in an ecclesiastical career: he himself, likewise at an early age, followed that uncle's footsteps in another respect, and began to 'court the stubborn Muse', a course which the paternal eve would seem to have viewed with disfavour. He made two protracted stavs in Rome, in the suite of French ambassadors to the Holy See, and though he did not thereby in any way advance his fortunes, he profited by his opportunities to read at first hand the chief Italian poets, whom he frequently imitates, and to complete his equipment as a satirist by his observation of that world of intrigue and of social pleasures into which he plunged with all too little restraint. On the death of his uncle a pension of 2000 livres on the abbey of Vaux-de-Cernay, and a few years later a canonry of the cathedral of Chartres, put it in his power to lead that merry life which proved for him, as for so many, also a short one. His health was undermined by his excesses, and he died at the age of forty, having previously given expression to what would seem to have been a sincere repentance in religious verses which at times are of considerable merit. Like Théophile de Viau, with whom in his character and in some respects in his life he presents many features of resemblance, he paid the penalty of the bad company he had kept, and of the licence which he had permitted himself in his verse, by having attributed to him licentious verses of which he had not rendered himself guilty. Like him, too, he was hostile to the reforms of Malherbe, an hostility which in his case was in a manner hereditary, for it is said that he never pardoned the latter a witty shaft aimed at his uncle. Malherbe, so the story went, dining one day at the generous table of Desportes, and being invited by his host before dinner to listen to some of his poetry, had brusquely retorted that he 'much preferred his soup to his psalms'. Régnier passes for the first great French satirist, the French poet who, as Boileau says, 'by the common consent best knew, before Molière, the manners and the character of men'. But Régnier's satire had little virulence, and was rarely of that directly personal character which provokes the bitter hatred of its victims. It was amusement, not indignation, that 'made his verse'. His writings include Satires, Épîtres, Élégies, Poésies diverses, Poésies spirituelles, Épigrammes and Sonnets.

AGAINST MALHERBE AND HIS SCHOOL

(From the Ninth Satire.)

Pensent-ils des plus vieux offensant la mémoire
Par le mépris d'autrui s'acquérir de la gloire,
Et, pour quelque vieux mot étrange ou de travers,
Prouver qu'ils ont raison de censurer leurs vers?
Cependant leur savoir ne s'étend seulement
Qu'à regratter un mot douteux au jugement,
Prendre garde qu'un qui ne heurte une diphtongue,¹
Épier si des vers la rime est brève ou longue,²
Ou bien si la voyelle, à l'autre s'unissant,
Ne rend point à l'oreille un vers trop languissant; ³
Et laissent sur le vert ⁴ le noble de l'ouvrage.
Nul aiguillon divin n'élève leur courage;

¹ i.e. carefully avoids the hiatus.

² To avoid rhyming the long vowel with the short. Thus the purists of Malherbe's school would not have admitted *rôle* to rhyme with parole or aumône with anémone.

³ Thus Ronsard and his school admitted mute e immediately following a sounded vowel in the same word to count as a syllable in the scansion, e.g. 'une plaie mortelle'. The purists would only admit such a word as plaie in verse when followed by an initial vowel, before which mute e was elided.

⁴ laissent sur le pré, i.e. abandonnent.

Ils rampent bassement, faibles d'inventions, Et n'osent, peu hardis, tenter les fictions, Froids à l'imaginer 1: car s'ils font quelque chose, C'est proser de la rime et rimer de la prose,2 Que l'art lime et relime, et polit de facon Qu'elle rend à l'oreille un agréable son : Et vovant qu'un beau feu leur cervelle n'embrase, Ils attifent leurs mots, enjolivent leur phrase, Affectent leur discours tout si relevé d'art,3 Et peignent leurs défauts de couleurs et de fard. Aussi je les compare à ces femmes jolies Qui par les affiquets 4 se rendent embellies. Qui gentes 5 en habits, et sades 6 en facons. Parmi leur point coupé 7 tendent leurs hamecons. Dont l'œil rit mollement avec afféterie Et de qui le parler n'est rien que flatterie; De rubans piolés 8 s'agencent proprement. Et toute leur beauté ne gît qu'en l'ornement: Leur visage reluit de céruse et de peautre 9: Propres en leur coiffure, un poil ne passe l'autre. Où 10 ces divins esprits, hautains et relevés, Qui des eaux d'Hélicon ont les sens abreuvés.11

¹ imaginer is here a substantive, l' the article. 2 'It is prosing rhyme and rhyming prose.'

^{3 &#}x27;Adorn with affectation their speech, which is all so seasoned with artifice.

^{4 &#}x27;gewgaws', diminutive of affique, a doublet of affiche, properly at which is 'affixed'.

5 gentilles. that which is 'affixed'.

6 'pleasing' (Lat. sapidus). The word sade survives in the com-

pound maussade. 7 A kind of lace-work.

^{8 &#}x27;variegated, pied.' Piolé is from pie, as in English pied from pie (magpie), from the speckled colour of the bird.

Peautre is the English word pewter, meaning tin, salts of which were used as a cosmetic.

^{10 &#}x27;whereas,' Régnier now proceeds to contrast with the 'artificial' school of Malherbe the 'natural' school to which he claims to belong. 11 We have here an anacoluthon, or change of construction. The

poet set out to speak of 'ces divins esprits', but instead of com-

De verve et de fureur 1 leur ouvrage étincelle. De leurs vers tout divins la grâce est naturelle. Et sont, comme l'on voit, la parfaite beauté, Qui, contente de soi, laisse la nouveauté Que l'art trouve au Palais 2 ou dans le blanc d'Espagne : Rien que le naturel sa grâce n'accompagne : Son front, lavé d'eau claire, éclate d'un beau teint : De roses et de lis la nature l'a peint. Et. laissant là Mercure 3 et toutes ses malices. Les nonchalances 4 sont ses plus grands artifices.

THÉOPHILE DE VIAU (1590-1626), a Gascon by birth, a Huguenot in religion, came to Paris at the age of nineteen, won himself a place amongst the wits and the fashionables of the day, made the acquaintance of Balzac, himself then only eighteen, and accompanied him on a tour in Holland, from which the two returned mortal enemies. Back in Paris, he attached himself, as was the custom of the time, to the service of a nobleman, wrote verses for Court masquerades and the like, and leapt into fame with his tragedy, Purame et Thisbé. Himself an avowed admirer both of Ronsard and of Malherbe, he was of too independent a spirit to range himself amongst the disciples of either, and accordingly broke with both, rebelling equally against the 'labour of the file', preached by the latter, and the 'imitation of the ancients' recommended by the former. Being, as was unhappily at all times only too frequently the case with the champions of liberty in letters, as impatient of restraint in his conduct as in his art, he made wreck of his life by the irregularity of his manners and the licence of his writings. He was exiled, lived some two years in

pleting his sentence with this word as its subject he substitutes for it leur ouvrage'.

¹ The divine 'frenzy' of the inspired poet.

² The Palais de Justice, or law-courts, a resort of the world of fashion, in whose arcades were sold amongst other things various toilette requisites.

³ The poet puns upon the word Mercury, in the two senses of the god of trade and of artifice and the metal itself which was used in

cosmetics.

"negligence' opposed to 'art' as a source of poetic charm.

England, abjured his religion and returned to France, made two campaigns with the King, and, again falling into disgrace, was made the scapegoat for the literary licence of the times, which at worst he had but shared with others. His sentence of death was commuted into banishment, but his return to Paris was connived at, and there he died at the age of thirty-six. His writings further include odes, sonnets, and elegies. His repute during his lifetime was such that his works had been placed by the Academy amongst those to be excerpted for the dictionary of that body. Pilloried by Boileau somewhat unjustly for the false taste displayed in his *Pyrame et Thisbé*, which was written under the Italian influence, he quickly fell into disrepute and oblivion, from which he was rescued in the 'whirligig of time' by the Romantics of the nineteenth century.

MORNING PICTURE

La lune fuit devant nos yeux; La nuit a retiré ses voiles; Peu à peu le front des étoiles S'unit à la couleur des cieux.

Déjà la diligente avette ¹
Boit la marjolaine et le thym,
Et revient riche du butin
Qu'elle a pris sur le mont Hymette.

Je vois les agneaux bondissants Sur ces blés qui ne font que naître ; Chloris, chantant, les mène paître Parmi ces coteaux verdissants.

Les oiseaux, d'un joyeux ramage, En chantant semblent adorer La lumière qui vient dorer Leur cabinet et leur plumage.

¹ abeille. Diminutive from Lat. apis.

La charrue écorche la plaine : Le bouvier qui suit les sillons Presse de voix et d'aiguillons Le couple de bœufs qui l'entraîne.

Alix apprête son fuseau; Sa mère, qui lui fait sa tâche, Presse le chanvre qu'elle attache A sa quenouille de roseau.

Une confuse violence Trouble le calme de la nuit, Et la lumière avec le bruit Dissipent l'ombre et le silence.

Les bêtes sont dans leur tanière, Qui tremblent de voir le soleil. L'homme, remis par le sommeil, Reprend son œuvre coutumière.

Le forgeron est au fourneau; Ois ¹ comme le charbon s'allume, Le fer rouge dessus l'enclume Étincelle sous le marteau.

Cette chandelle semble morte: Le jour la fait évanouir: Le soleil vient nous éblouir; Vois qu'il passe à travers la porte.

Il est jour. Levons-nous, Philis: Allons à notre jardinage, Voir s'il est, comme ton visage, Semé de roses et de lis.

¹ Imperative of our, 'hark!'

CHAPTER III

BIRTH OF CLASSIC PROSE

JEAN-LOUIS GUEZ DE BALZAC (1594-1654). Outside his writings, Balzac's life offers few details of interest. Reference has already been made (p. 229) to his journey in Holland with Théophile and its fatal consequences to their friendship. his return Balzac attached himself to the duc d'Épernon, and thereafter spent two years in Italy in the suite of Cardinal de La Valette. His letters to the friends he had made in aristocratic circles were already the talk of Paris, and on his return Richelieu bestowed on him a pension of 2000 livres, with the titles of Councillor of State and Historiographer of France. Being not vet thirty years of age, he retired to his estate on the Charente, whether from delicate health, as he gave out, or prompted by the love of sylvan solitude which he affected, or rather, as has been hinted, because his vanity found its account in his thus withdrawing himself like an oriental potentate from the eves of his admiring subjects, whom he continued to dazzle by the letters he darted forth, as it were, from time to time from the clouds in which he shrouded himself, but whom a nearer acquaintance with their divinity might have disillusioned. He was one of the original members of the Academy and maintained intimate relations with the Hôtel de Rambouillet from the depths of his solitude.

Later ages have formed other conceptions of the ideal epistolary style. What we value in the letter is the liveliness and naturalness which make of it the counterpart of the conversation which it replaces. Balzac's letters were formal compositions which were intended to pass from hand to hand amongst his admirers, to furnish topics of conversation in literary circles, and to serve as models of eloquence to his disciples. They might indeed more fairly be compared with the magazine articles of the present day. Their writer did not grudge spending a fortnight over the com-

position of a single letter. Lacking depth of original thought, warmth of feeling, and the colouring of imagination, his style abounds in all the ornaments of rhetoric and errs on the side of over-elaboration. It furnished the model of which French prose was at the time most in need, and left its mark for good on the style of such later masters of prose as Pascal and Bossuet.

Balzac's writings further include Aristippe, on the reconciliation of duty with policy, Le Socrate chrétien, a moral and religious treatise, and Le Prince, on the virtues of kings in general and of Louis XIII in particular.

A COUNTRY RETREAT

Nous sommes ici en un petit rond tout couronné de montagnes, et où il reste encore quelques grains de cet or dont les premiers siècles ont été faits. Certainement, quand le feu s'allume aux quatre coins de la France, et qu'à cent pas d'ici la terre est toute couverte de troupes et les armées ennemies d'un commun consentement pardonnent toujours à notre village, le printemps qui commence les sièges et les autres entreprises de la guerre, et qui depuis douze ans a été moins attendu pour le changement des saisons que pour celui des affaires, ne nous fait iamais rien voir de nouveau que des violettes et des roses. Notre peuple ne se conserve dans son innocence ni par la crainte des lois, ni par l'étude de la sagesse. Pour bien faire il suit simplement la bonté de sa nature, et tire plus d'avantage de l'ignorance du vice, que nous n'en avons de la connaissance de la vertu. De sorte qu'en ce royaume de demi-lieue on ne sait que c'est de tromper que 1 les oiseaux et les bêtes, et le style du Palais 2 est une langue aussi inconnue que celle de l'Amérique, ou de l'autre partie du monde qui n'est pas encore découverte. Les choses qui nuisent à la santé des

¹ The law-courts. There is no litigation amongst these simple folk.

^{* =} si ce n'est.

- hommes, ou qui offensent leurs yeux, en sont généralement bannies: il ne se vit jamais de lézards ni de couleuvres, et de toutes les sortes de reptiles nous ne connaissons que les melons et les fraises. 1 Je ne veux pas vous faire le portrait d'une maison dont l'ouvrage n'est ni si excellent que de Fontainebleau, ni la matière si précieuse que le marbre et le porphyre. Je vous dirai seulement qu'à la porte il v a un bois, où en plein midi il n'entre de jour que ce qu'il en faut pour n'être pas nuit, et pour empêcher que toutes les couleurs ne soient noires : tellement que de l'obscurité et de la lumière il se fait un troisième temps qui peut être supporté des veux des Les arbres y sont verts jusqu'à la racine, tant de leurs propres feuilles, que de celles du lierre qui les embrasse; et pour le fruit qui leur manque, leurs branches sont chargées de tourtres et de faisans en toutes saisons de l'année. De là j'entre en une prairie où je marche sur les tulipes et les anémones, que j'ai fait mêler avec les autres fleurs pour voir si les françaises seraient aussi belles que les étrangères. Or, de quelque part que je tourne les veux en cette agréable solitude, je trouve une rivière qui devrait avoir autant de réputation que le Tage, et dans laquelle les animaux qui vont boire voient le ciel aussi clairement que nous faisons, et jouissent de l'avantage qu'ailleurs les hommes leur veulent ôter. Au reste cette belle eau aime tellement ce petit pays, qu'elle se divise en mille branches, et fait une infinité d'îles et de détours, afin de s'y amuser davantage, et quand elle se déborde, ce n'est que pour rendre l'année plus riche, et pour nous faire prendre sur la terre ses truites et ses brochets, qui méritent bien qu'elle n'envie ni à la mer ses monstres, ni au Nil ses crocodiles.

which are 'creeping things', the literal sense of reptiles.

REMORSE

(From the Socrate chrétien)

Les jeux, les divertissements, les plaisirs ne guérissent point les âmes qui souffrent. Ce ne sont point de véritables remèdes : ce sont de simples amusements de la douleur. Ils ne chassent point, ils n'emportent point le mal ; ils trompent, ils endorment le malade. Ils ne produisent que des intervalles de relâche, que des moments de tranquillité. Les joies qui sont artificielles durent peu ; pour être longues et assurées, il faut qu'elles viennent de source et que la nature soit contente. Il faut que le contentement ait sa racine dans le cœur, autrement ce n'est que du fard sur le visage. Le moindre accident l'efface, et l'apparence tombe au premier rayon de la vérité. Aussi votre Virgile a mis en enfer ces sortes de joies, et les appelle de mauvaises joies. Pensezvous que celles de la Cour soient beaucoup meilleures ?

Représentez-vous, je vous prie, le cruel Théodoric après la mort du sage Symmague : il est assis à une table d'or et d'ivoire, chargée des tributs de plusieurs provinces, des dépouilles de la terre et de la mer. Ce n'est pas tout que cela. Outre les moissons de fleurs, - et ce fut peut-être en hiver que cette fête fut célébrée, - outre les fruits étrangers et ceux du pays, outre la rareté et l'abondance en un même lieu, il y a quelque chose de plus délicat et de moins matériel qui entre dans le festin, et qui va chatouiller l'esprit par le passage des sens. Les douces fumées des parfums, les charmes ravissants de la musique, les bouffons et les flatteurs ne manquent point à Théodoric pour la perfection de la bonne chère. Il croit se pouvoir réjouir avec ce grand appareil de joie. Mais tout d'un coup on sert devant lui la tête d'un gros poisson, et il s'imagine d'abord, et il s'écrie immédiatement après, que c'est la tête de Symmaque qu'on lui apporte de l'autre monde, que c'est Symmaque, qui sort du tombeau, et qui apparaît à lui avec sa tête sanglante.

Cette tête que Théodoric a fait couper ne lui donne ni paix ni trêve. Il a toujours en présence un objet qu'il veut toujours fuir; il se souvient sans cesse de ce qu'il veut sans cesse oublier. Il trouve partout des images de son crime; et les plus mal peintes, comme celle-ci, ne laissent pas de blesser son imagination, de faire douleur à sa mémoire, de corrompre les plaisirs qui lui ont été préparés, d'empoisonner les viandes qu'on lui a servies.

René Descartes (1596-1650) studied the humanities, logic and ethics, physics, metaphysics and mathematics, in the Jesuit college of La Flèche, with little edification save in the case of mathematics, which charmed him by the certainty of its logical proofs. Thereafter he studied men in the frivolous society of Paris and as a volunteer soldier under Maurice of Nassau in Holland and under the Duke of Bayaria in the first stage of the Thirty Years' War. It was at this period that he conceived the plan of his first work, and the general outlines of his system of philosophy. Seeking a retreat which would offer him shelter from the distractions of Paris and from the religious persecution to which the independent thinker was at that time exposed, he settled in Holland, where he spent the next twenty years in almost absolute seclusion, occupied with scientific experiments and the elaboration of his theories. These belong to the history of science rather than to the history of literature, yet they find frequent reflections in the latter. This indeed they could scarcely fail to do, for the new philosophy was all the vogue in the fashionable world of Paris, where the 'petits corps' and the 'tourbillons' of Descartes, and his theory of the 'bête-machine', formed favourite topics of conversation in all the salons. In those days of 'femmes savantes' even princesses did not disdain to be numbered amongst his disciples. To the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Frederick V, Elector Palatine, he played in effect the part of

father-confessor, and, resisting solicitations to settle in England and in France, he accepted, in 1649, the pressing invitation of Christina, Queen of Sweden, to Stockholm, where he died a few months later, the severity of the climate proving too much for his congenitally delicate constitution. Apart from the indirect influence of his philosophy, which permeated the literature of the century, the influence of his lucid and closely reasoned Discours de la Méthode on French prose was so capital as to be almost creative

CONTENTMENT

Ma troisième maxime était de tâcher toujours plutôt à me vaincre que la fortune, et à changer mes désirs que l'ordre du monde, et généralement de m'accoutumer à croire qu'il n'y a rien qui soit entièrement en notre pouvoir que nos pensées, en sorte qu'après que nous avons fait notre mieux touchant les choses qui nous sont extérieures, tout ce qui manque de nous réussir est au regard de nous absolument impossible. Et ceci seul me semblait être suffisant pour m'empêcher de rien désirer à l'avenir que je n'acquisse, et ainsi pour me rendre content : car, notre volonté ne se portant naturellement à désirer que les choses que notre entendement lui représente en quelque facon comme possibles, il est certain que, si nous considérons tous les biens qui sont hors de nous comme également éloignés de notre pouvoir, nous n'aurons pas plus de regret de manquer de ceux qui semblent être dus à notre naissance, lorsque nous en serons privés sans notre faute, que nous avons de ne posséder pas les royaumes de la Chine ou du Mexique : et que, faisant, comme on dit, de nécessité vertu, nous ne désirerons pas davantage d'être sains étant malades, ou d'être libres étant en prison, que nous faisons maintenant d'avoir des corps d'une matière aussi peu corruptible que les diamants, ou des ailes pour voler comme les oiseaux.

Mais j'avoue qu'il est besoin d'un long exercice et d'une méditation souvent réitérée pour s'accoutumer à regarder de ce biais toutes les choses; et je crois que c'est principalement en ceci que consistait le secret de ces philosophes qui ont pu autrefois se soustraire de l'empire de la fortune et, malgré les douleurs et la pauvreté, disputer de la félicité avec leurs dieux.

BOOK IV.

THE SUPREMACY OF CLASSICISM

INTRODUCTION

FROM about the middle of the seventeenth century classicism held undisputed sway in France. Its principles were derived in the first instance from the study of the Greek and Roman classics. The manifest superiority of these over the literature of the mediaeval world imposed on modern writers the attempt to achieve success on the same lines. That attempt itself implied the assumption that creative art is governed by certain unvarying laws, valid in all places and at all times. The logical French The mind found the fundamental law, from which all Reign of the others might be derived, in the law of reason. Reason is the only faculty of the human mind which in all men and under all circumstances leads to the same conclusion. Imagination is a will-o'-the-wisp which leads reason astray, emotion a storm which drives it out of its course. And so reason was set up as the 'tenth Muse', and the greatest of all her sisters. The object of art is the beautiful, the object of reason is the truth. Classicism identified these Truth is two objects, and held, in the words of Boileau, that Beauty, Beauty 'rien n'est beau que le vrai, le vrai seul est aimable '. Truth. Imagination and passion were put out of court, save in so far as they could accommodate their pace to that of their sober guide; and that is not very far, for imagination soars on wings away from the solid earth where reason plants her feet, and as for emotion, we all know that love is blind, that anger is a short madness.

This docile submission to the guidance of reason

led to a remarkable homogeneity in the aims and

methods of the classical writers, which is manifest in all their works, no matter in what literary form The Study they may be cast. Whether they write tragedies of Man. like Racine, or comedies like Molière, or sermons like Bossuet, or whether they be professed moralists like Pascal, La Bruyère, and La Rochefoucauld, their interest centres in the inner workings of the mind of man and the effect upon these of the social relations into which he enters. The letter-writers, like Mme de Sévigné, who entertain their contemporaries with the doings of their own world, and the writers of memoirs, like Saint-Simon, who perform a like office for posterity, have the same

absorbing interest in their fellow-man; and even a writer of fables, like La Fontaine, who at first sight eludes this classification, finds his niche in it on a nearer examination, for the animals which are his dramatis personae are but men in disguise.

Neither is it with the whims and humours of this or that particular man that the French classicists are concerned, nor yet with the material circumstances in which he moves and has his being. French classicism will create no Falstaff, nor will it exert itself to stage again the external features of a past age, or to portray the manners and customs of a foreign country. It is with the type that it is concerned: with the features that are common to all men, or at least to certain large and well-defined groups; in short, with man in the abstract. The oddities and eccentricities of this or that man, which forbid his classification with any well-marked type, are not 'true to nature' in the classical sense. Such 'sports' or 'freaks' of character are contrary to 'reason': Nature herself was nodding when she created them. In like manner 'reason' has nothing to say to varieties of costume or custom: these are but external attributes, accidental eccentricities,

The Ideal Man. which do not affect the heart that beats beneath them. The Classical School sees nothing incongruous in presenting the heroes of Homer in the powdered wig, the doublet and hose of its own period. It is indeed not in the least anxious to present its characters as Greek or Roman, but merely as rational creatures, as men. If it could, it would put their naked souls on the stage: this being impossible, it prefers to clothe their bodies in the costume which is least characteristic, which will least distract the attention of the spectators from the play of "mind" in the personages of the drama—the costume, that is, of its own time,

The indifference of the Classical School to Nature The has, at least in part, a similar explanation. It is not Classical perhaps so entirely insensible to the charms of rural and nature as has sometimes been supposed, but it Nature. knows nothing of any 'communion with Nature' after the manner of the Romantics. For how could there be any communion between man, who is an intellectual and spiritual being, and Nature, which is a material thing? The 'Nature' which Boileau has ever on his lips is not the Nature of Wordsworth. It is the nature of man, of his inner life and inner consciousness. 'The proper study of mankind is man.'

The same preoccupations are manifest when we the turn to the language which the Classical School Classical elaborated to be its instrument. The first demand and which reason makes upon language is that it shall Language. be precise, unambiguous and uniform. Is not its one function to convey truths from one mind to another? A word which is unfamiliar to the polite society of Paris, the public to which the classical writer makes appeal, is an obstacle to ready comprehension; hence the proscription of dialect and of technical words, of archaisms and neologisms. Hence too the intolerance of Classicism for that twilight vagueness of poetical utterance so charming

to the Romantics, which suggests, or claims to suggest, more than it says or can say. Your thought cannot be expressed in words? That is a confession of failure. Or you are mistaken, you have no thought. The classical style is sober, lucid, impatient of hyperbole, not delighting in fanciful or

far-fetched metaphors.

and Court Patronage.

The characteristics of French classical literature. which thus derive naturally from its foundation in the principle of reason, were in many respects reinforced by the nature of the public to which it Classicism appealed. It lived upon the patronage of the Court, and to the tastes of the Court it naturally adapted itself. In his great palace of Versailles the King gathered about him the nobility of the land. who there spent the day in a round of social diversions which can best be compared with a continuous house-party, whose relations were governed by the most punctilious etiquette. This artificial. highly refined, drawing-room society, which was out of touch with all the vulgar details of material life. created a literature in its own image. In such a society whatever is too individual must be repressed; no man must distinguish himself by any personal eccentricity from his fellows; the vulgar and the offensive are proscribed; the abnormal is excluded: all must submit to be moulded to one type; and the language must conform to one uniform, conventional standard of stately courtesy. Such a society is itself an abstraction, a body of phantoms living in an ideal world, in which imagination is dulled and emotion intellectualized. And we shall find its characteristics faithfully reflected in the literature created for it; in its homogeneity, its sobriety, its exclusive interest in man and his social relations; in its ignoring of 'low life'; in its indifference to the charms of unsophisticated Nature: in its dislike of the abnormal; in the gradual

impoverishment of its language, shrinking ever more and more from the blunt expression of those vulgar facts of common every-day life with which the daily routine of Court life did not bring it into contact, and for which the very words found no place in the vocabulary of the Court, as the things themselves had no place in its daily social intercourse.

The English reader, nurtured upon a literature French which, in spite of its excursion into classicism in the Classicism and the eighteenth century, is essentially romantic, inevitably English feels himself disconcerted upon his first introduction Reader. to a literature based upon diametrically opposite principles. In its poetry he misses much which he has been accustomed to regard as the very soul of poetry. There is in classical French poetry no glimmer of the 'light that never was on land or sea'. The 'school of reason' would have been tempted to cavil at the very expression as a logical absurdity. The 'light of common day' is the only light it knows. The English reader will miss the fine flights of imagination, the whimsical portrayal of individual eccentricity of our Elizabethan dramatists; he will miss the note of personal emotion, the cry of the soul, of our lyrics; the language will seem to him lacking in warmth and richness of colour, the metaphors tame.

The classical formula was too narrow, and classi- Wherein cism paid the penalty. In epic poetry, which lives Classicism upon imagination, it produced nothing that has what it lived; the lyric muse was all but mute from the achieved. Pléiade to the Romantics. Classicism sought to carve out no realm in the fairy-land of fancy-it contented itself with exploring the world of man. But it threaded as no other literature has done, in every turn and twist, the maze of the human And it created as its instrument a language unsurpassed in ancient or modern times in subtlety

of analysis and precision of expression.

CHAPTER I

SATIRIC AND DIDACTIC POETRY

NICOLAS BOILEAU (1636-1711), who assumed the cognomen of Despréaux, was the fifteenth of sixteen children of Gilles Boileau, registrar of the great chamber of the Parliament of Paris. In its choice of a career for him his family wavered between the Bar and the Church. His vocation for poetry declared itself early. He was actually called to the bar in 1656. but the death of his father in 1657 set him free to follow his own bent, and the history of the remainder of his life is little more than a history of his writings, of the friendships they brought him. the honours they won him, and the polemics in which they involved him. Famous amongst literary friendships is that which linked into one brotherhood the four greatest writers of the age of Louis-Quatorze-Molière, Racine, La Fontaine, and Boileau. The principles of criticism which, enshrined in the Art poétique, were to become the literary creed of the Classical School, were largely elaborated in concert by the four friends in their informal gatherings. Boileau's writings further include Satires and Épîtres, which differ but in name, Le Lutrin, a mock-heroic poem, and polemical writings in prose and verse. Though it was by his social satire that Boileau first won fame, his literary satire was the most original part of his work. Both made him many enemies, for he did not hesitate to put the cap on folly wherever he found it. He was in particular an uncompromising foe of all that he thought false taste in literature, pursuing it mercilessly with the shafts of his satire, alike in his writings and in his conversation. Amongst those whom he pilloried in his writings were many whose names ranked high in the republic of letters when he first established himself as censor. In few cases has his judgement been revoked by posterity, and then only partially. Yet though Boileau attacked folly in the person itself of its devotees, and rarely shrank from writing the name beneath the picture, it was the folly, rather than the person, at which he aimed. He was ultimately reconciled with most of those whose writings he had attacked, and anecdotes abound of his generosity towards distressed authors, including his enemies and detractors, and of the unselfish use he made of his influence with the King. Upon the latter, indeed, in accordance with the custom, he lavished in official enlogies what seems to us the most fulsome adulation, but on occasion he could tell him the salutary truth. with a seasoning of witty flattery which made it more easy to digest. Thus when His Majesty showed him one day a sonnet he had written, the critic and courtier saved his reputation in both capacities by the ingenious remark: 'Sire, rien n'est impossible à Votre Maiesté: elle a voulu faire de mauvais vers. elle v a parfaitement réussi.' In 1684 Boileau was elected a member of the French Academy, and shortly after of the Académie des médailles. He was now a person of no little importance, the acknowledged 'Legislator of Parnassus', whose name was on every lip, at court, in town, and in the provinces. Wealth had followed fame. He had a country house at Auteuil. where he held a court in the midst of his admirers, and which is famous as the scene of those gatherings with his brother poets which were of such moment in the history of French literature. The last days of the poet were sad. Failing health confined him to his house at Auteuil. He had never married, and saw his friends one by one snatched away by death, whilst the principles which he had at heart were threatened in the famous 'Querelle des anciens et des modernes '. His last vears he spent as a hopeless invalid in the cloisters of Notre-Dame, where he died in 1711 of dropsy of the chest, leaving his large fortune to be divided equally between his relatives and the poor of Paris, after the payment of some legacies to friends and servants. The numerous concourse which attended his funeral attracted attention: it was thought strange that one who spoke ill of everybody should have so many friends.

ÉPÎTRE VII

A M. RACINE

Envy a spur to merit.

(This epistle was written on the occasion of the production of Racine's *Phèdre* on January 1, 1677. Racine's enemies, informed of the subject which he was treating, had instigated Pradon, a third-rate author, to write a play on the same subject, which

was produced in another theatre two days after Racine's. They had even gone the length of engaging all the first seats of both theatres for the first six performances, by which device they had brought it about that Racine's piece was played to empty benches and that of his rival to a crowded house. By this and the like machinations the cabal won a temporary victory; for the time being, Pradon's Phèdre carried off the palm. Racine, disgusted with this undeserved check, wearied of the underhand attacks for which each of his pieces gave the signal, and, sincere Jansenist as he was at heart, not altogether at ease in bis own mind on the moral and religious aspect of his calling of playwright, withdrew altogether from the career of dramatic author for twelve years, and only took up his pen again, at the urgent instance of Mme de Maintenon, to write Esther (1689) and Athalie (1691) for representation by the pupils of that lady's 'school for young ladies' at Saint-Cyr.)

Que tu sais bien. Racine, à l'aide d'un acteur, Émouvoir, étonner, ravir un spectateur! Jamais Iphigénie, en Aulide immolée. N'a coûté tant de pleurs à la Grèce assemblée, Que, dans l'heureux spectacle à nos veux étalé, En a fait sous son nom verser la Champmêlé.¹ Ne crois pas toutefois, par tes savants ouvrages, Entraînant tous les cœurs, gagner tous les suffrages. Sitôt que d'Apollon un génie inspiré Trouve loin du vulgaire un chemin ignoré, En cent lieux contre lui les cabales s'amassent: Ses rivaux obscurcis autour de lui croassent: Et son trop de lumière, importunant les yeux, De ses propres amis lui fait des envieux; La mort seule ici-bas, en terminant sa vie, Peut calmer sur son nom l'injustice et l'envie; Faire au poids du bon sens peser tous ses écrits, Et donner à ses vers leur légitime prix.

¹ La Champmêlé, a famous actress who played the leading women's rôles in Racine's tragedies, including that of *Iphigénie*.

Avant qu'un peu de terre, obtenu par prière. Pour jamais sous la tombe eût enfermé Molière 1, Mille de ces beaux traits, aujourd'hui si vantés, Furent des sots esprits à nos veux rebutés. L'ignorance et l'erreur à ses naissantes pièces, En habits de marquis, en robes de comtesses, Venaient pour diffamer son chef-d'œuvre nouveau Et secouaient la tête à l'endroit le plus beau. Le commandeur voulait 2 la scène plus exacte : Le vicomte 3 indigné sortait au second acte. L'un, défenseur zélé des bigots 4 mis en jeu. Pour prix de ses bons mots le condamnait au feu; L'autre, fougueux marquis, lui déclarant la guerre, Voulait venger la cour immolée au parterre 5. Mais, sitôt que d'un trait de ses fatales mains La Parque l'eut ravé du nombre des humains, On reconnut le prix de sa muse éclipsée. L'aimable comédie, avec lui terrassée, En vain d'un coup si rude espéra revenir Et sur ses brodequins 6 ne put plus se tenir. Tel fut chez nous le sort du théâtre comique.

Toi donc qui, t'élevant sur la scène tragique, Suis les pas de Sophocle, et, seul de tant d'esprits, De Corneille vieilli sais consoler Paris,

¹ Molière, recently dead (1675), was as an actor, and therefore excommunicate, refused Christian burial in his own parish; only the intervention of the King at the instance of his widow procured for him burial in the cemetery of Saint-Joseph, and even then only with 'maimed rites'.

² The commandeur de Souvré.

³ Du Broussin, who ostentatiously left the theatre during the second act of the École des Femmes. ⁴ The reference is to the Tartufe, directed against religious hypocrisy.

⁵ i.e. offered up to the laughter of the parterre or pit. The foppish young marquises in particular were the frequent butts of Molière's satire.

⁶ The *socks*, which stood for comedy, as the *cothurne*, or *buskin*, for tragedy, these being the footwear of the ancient actors in the two forms respectively.

Cesse de t'étonner si l'envie animée,
Attachant à ton nom sa rouille envenimée,
La calomnie en main,¹ quelquefois te poursuit.
En cela, comme en tout, le ciel qui nous conduit,
Racine, fait briller sa profonde sagesse.
Le mérite en repos s'endort dans la paresse;
Mais par les envieux un génie excité
Au comble de son art est mille fois monté:
Plus on veut l'affaiblir, plus il croît et s'élance.
Au Cid persécuté ² Cinna doit sa naissance;
Et peut-être ta plume aux censeurs de Pyrrhus ³
Doit les plus nobles traits dont tu peignis Burrhus.

(I, too, whose lesser merit wounds less the eye of envy, have nevertheless by my free humour furnished myself with useful enemies, to whose hatred I am more indebted that to the slender talents for which I am praised. Ever conscious that they are lying in wait for me to trip, I have a care to walk only the more circumspectly; and should they find me at fault, I retort by correcting myself.)

Imite mon exemple; et, lorsqu'une cabale, Un flot de vains auteurs follement te ravale, Profite de leur haine et de leur mauvais sens: Ris du bruit passager de leurs cris impuissants. Que peut contre tes vers une ignorance vaine? Le Parnasse français, ennobli par ta veine, Contre tous ses complots saura te maintenir, Et soulever pour toi l'équitable avenir.

Boileau concludes by a lofty eulogy of his friend, whose labours have rendered an illustrious age yet more glorious; he enumerates with scathing comments the small fry of literature who are

¹ The reference is to the satires against Racine passed from hand to hand.

² Corneille's Cid (1636), like Racine's Phèdre, had roused formidable enmities. His Cinna appeared in 1639.

³ Pyrrhus, a character in Racine's Andromaque (1668). Burrhus, the virtuous counsellor of Nero in Britannicus (1669).

self-condemned by their lack of appreciation of the beauties of Racine, contrasts with them the great souls, from the King downwards, by whose admiration Racine may well be consoled. and roguishly hints at the significant proximity of the theatre where Prador's Phèdre was played to a popular puppet-show of the day.

SATIRE VI

Les embarras de Paris.

(In this satire Boileau adapts to the peculiar circumstances of Paris portions of Juvenal's Third Satire and of Martial's Fiftyseventh Epigram, which treat of the drawbacks of life at Rome. Johnson similarly adapted these satires to the circumstances of London.)

Qui frappe l'air, bon Dieu! de ces lugubres cris? Est-ce donc pour veiller qu'on se couche à Paris? Et quel fâcheux démon, durant les nuits entières, Rassemble ici les chats de toutes les gouttières? J'ai beau sauter du lit, plein de trouble et d'effroi. Je pense qu'avec eux tout l'enfer est chez moi : L'un miaule en grondant comme un tigre en furie, L'autre roule sa voix comme un enfant qui crie. Ce n'est pas tout encor; les souris et les rats Semblent, pour m'éveiller, s'entendre avec les chats. Plus importuns pour moi, durant la nuit obscure, Que jamais, en plein jour, ne fut l'abbé De Pure.1

Tout conspire à la fois à troubler mon repos. Et je me plains ici du moindre de mes maux; Car à peine les cogs, commençant leur ramage 2, Auront de cris aigus frappé le voisinage. Qu'un affreux serrurier, laborieux Vulcain, Qu'éveillera bientôt l'ardente soif du gain,

¹ Boileau here gibbets an enemy, who persecuted him with pamphlets, as a notorious bore.

² ramage, a highly poetical word, used of the cock has a mock-heroic effect; tr. 'warbling'.

Avec un fer maudit, qu'à grand bruit il apprête, De cent coups de marteau me va fendre la tête. J'entends déjà partout les charrettes courir, Les maçons travailler, les boutiques s'ouvrir: Tandis que dans les airs mille cloches émues ¹ D'un funèbre concert font retentir les nues; Et, se mêlant au bruit de la grêle et des vents, Pour honorer les morts font mourir les vivants.

Encor je bénirais la bonté souveraine Si le ciel à ces maux avait borné ma peine : Mais si seul en mon lit je peste avec raison. C'est encor pis vingt fois en quittant la maison : En quelque endroit que j'aille, il faut fendre la presse D'un peuple d'importuns qui fourmillent sans cesse. L'un me heurte d'un ais dont je suis tout froissé; Je vois d'un autre coup mon chapeau renversé. Là, d'un enterrement la funèbre ordonnance D'un pas lugubre et lent vers l'église s'avance : Et plus loin des laquais, l'un l'autre s'agacants,2 Font abover les chiens et jurer les passants. Des paveurs en ce lieu me bouchent le passage. Là, je trouve une croix 3 de funeste présage, Et des couvreurs, grimpés au toit d'une maison, En font pleuvoir l'ardoise et la tuile à foison; Là, sur une charrette une poutre branlante Vient menaçant de loin la foule qu'elle augmente; Six chevaux attelés à ce fardeau pesant Ont peine à l'émouvoir 4 sur le pavé glissant. D'un carrosse en tournant il accroche une roue Et du choc le renverse en un grand tas de boue :

^{1 &#}x27;set in movement.' In modern French only of mental 'emotion'.
2 'chaffing one another.' The present participle would not now take the sign of the plural in this case.

³ A cross of laths was hung out to warn passers-by that a house was being roofed.

⁴ See note 1.

Quand un autre à l'instant s'efforcant de passer Dans le même embarras se vient embarrasser. Vingt carrosses bientôt arrivant à la file Y sont en moins de rien suivis de plus de mille; Et, pour surcroît de maux, un sort malencontreux Conduit en cet endroit un grand troupeau de bœufs; Chacun prétend passer : l'un mugit, l'autre jure ; Des mulets en sonnant augmentent le murmure. Aussitôt cent chevaux dans la foule appelés De l'embarras qui croît ferment les défilés, Et partout, des passants enchaînant les brigades, Au milieu de la paix font voir les barricades 1. On n'entend que des cris poussés confusément : Dieu, pour s'y faire ouïr, tonnerait vainement. Moi donc, qui dois souvent en certain lieu me rendre. Le jour déjà baissant, et qui suis las d'attendre, Ne sachant plus tantôt 2 à quel saint me vouer, Je me mets au hasard 3 de me faire rouer. Je saute vingt ruisseaux, i'esquive, ie me pousse; Guénaud 4 sur son cheval en passant m'éclabousse : Et, n'osant plus paraître en l'état où je suis, Sans songer où je vais, je me sauve où je puis.

Tandis que dans un coin en grondant je m'essuie, Souvent, pour m'achever, il survient une pluie: On dirait que le ciel, qui se fond tout en eau, Veuille inonder ces lieux d'un déluge nouveau. Pour traverser la rue, au milieu de l'orage, Un ais sur deux pavés forme un étroit passage: Le plus hardi laquais n'y marche qu'en tremblant: Il faut pourtant passer sur ce pont chancelant;

¹ The barricades, destined to play so prominent a part in French riots and revolutions, had already made their appearance during the *Fronde*.

² bientôt.

³ en péril.

⁴ Guénaud was a famous doctor, who had become proverbial in the saying: Guénaud et son cheval.

Et les nombreux torrents qui tombent des gouttières, Grossissant les ruisseaux, en ont fait des rivières. J'y passe en trébuchant; mais, malgré l'embarras, La frayeur de la nuit précipite mes pas.

Car sitôt que du soir les ombres pacifiques D'un double cadenas font fermer les boutiques. Que, retiré chez lui, le paisible marchand Va revoir ses billets et compter son argent : Que dans le Marché-Neuf tout est calme et tranquille. Les voleurs à l'instant s'emparent de la ville. Le bois le plus funeste et le moins fréquenté Est, au prix de Paris, un lieu de sûreté. Malheur donc à celui qu'une affaire imprévue Engage un peu trop tard au détour d'une rue! Bientôt quatre bandits lui serrent les côtés: La bourse!... Il faut se rendre; ou bien non, résistez, Afin que votre mort, de tragique mémoire, Des massacres fameux aille grossir l'histoire.1 Pour moi, fermant ma porte, et cédant au sommeil. Tous les jours je me couche avecque le soleil. Mais en ma chambre à peine ai-je éteint la lumière. Qu'il ne m'est plus permis de fermer la paupière. Des filous effrontés, d'un coup de pistolet, Ébranlent ma fenêtre et percent mon volet : J'entends crier partout : Au meurtre! On m'assassine! Ou: Le feu vient de prendre à la maison voisine! Tremblant et demi-mort, je me lève à ce bruit, Et souvent sans pourpoint je cours toute la nuit. Car le feu, dont la flamme en ondes se déploie, Fait de notre quartier une seconde Troie, Où maint Grec affamé, maint avide Argien, Au travers des charbons va piller le Troyen.

¹ The 'Newgate Calendar', as we might say.

Enfin sous mille crocs la maison abîmée ¹ Entraîne aussi le feu qui se perd en fumée.

Je me retire donc, encor pâle d'effroi:
Mais le jour est venu quand je rentre chez moi.
Je fais pour reposer un effort inutile;
Ce n'est qu'à prix d'argent qu'on dort en cette ville.
Il faudrait, dans l'enclos d'un vaste logement,
Avoir loin de la rue un autre appartement.

Paris est pour un riche un pays de Cocagne: ² Sans sortir de la ville, il trouve la campagne: Il peut dans son jardin, tout peuplé d'arbres verts, Recéler le printemps au milieu des hivers; Et, foulant le parfum de ses plantes fleuries, Aller entretenir ses douces rêveries.

Mais moi, grâce au destin, qui n'ai ni feu ni lieu, Je me loge où je puis, et comme il plaît à Dieu.

JEAN DE LA FONTAINE (1621-95) was born at Château-Thierry in Champagne, where his father held the post of 'maître des eaux et forêts'. His boyhood was thus passed in the midst of rural scenes, whence he imbibed a love of nature which his contemporaries for the most part lack. Meanwhile his education was neglected, but the deficiencies were made up by omnivorous reading. Nothing came amiss to his catholic taste, neither the popular authors of his own time, nor the older French writers from whom the Classical School turned with disdain, nor the Italians, nor vet the Greeks and Romans, of whom Horace in particular had great influence in the formation of his own style. Like Boileau, he studied for a while both theology and law without attaching himself finally to either. At the instance of his father, who hoped that domestic cares would furnish the ballast which his unstable character lacked, he married at the age of twenty-six, but never took seriously either the responsibilities

¹ The burning house was pulled down with hooks (crocs) to check the spread of the flames.

² The 'Land of Cockaigne', the proverbial paradise of the idler and the glutton, where 'the larks fall ready roasted into one's mouth'.

thus created, or indeed any other of the duties of life. He was fortunate in finding a series of protectors who took it upon them in turn to relieve him of the material cares of life, and drifted from one to another of these with little concern beyond the gratification of his immediate desires and the shifting on to the nearest pair of willing shoulders of all burdensome responsibilities. The first of these protectors was Fouquet, the magnificent 'surintendant des finances', whose fall into disfayour gave him an opportunity of showing that ingratitude, at least, was not one of his faults, and at the same time of giving (in the elegy Aux Numbers de Vaux, an appeal on his behalf to the clemency of Louis) the first convincing proof of his poetical gifts. In 1664 he entered the service of the Dowager Duchess of Orleans, and upon her death in 1672 he became the guest of Madame de la Sablière. She it was who wrote on one occasion: 'I have dismissed all my household: I have kept only my dog, my cat, and my La Fontaine.' For twenty years he enjoyed her hospitality. and, quitting it only upon her death, he found an asylum for the remainder of his days under the roof of M. d'Hervart. He is commonly known to posterity, as he was already known to his contemporaries, as 'le bon La Fontaine', the epithet implying those characteristics of simplicity and irresponsibility which appear in his conduct of his life, as also in the almost incredible anecdotes of absent-mindedness, not perhaps always over-well authenticated, which gathered about his name.

La Fontaine's title to Fame rests upon his Fables, of which the first six books appeared in 1668, the five following in 1678 and 1679, and the twelfth in 1694. In their praise of these, French critics know no limit, finding in them one of the most characteristic expressions of the French genius. For one they are an ample 'human comedy', to another they furnish full consolation for the missing French epic. They are praised for the spright-liness of the narration, for the charm of their descriptions of nature, for the truthfulness of their observation of animal life, for the raciness of their language, for the richness and variety of their metrical effects. On the other hand they have been challenged for the cynicism of their moral teaching. The truth is, they do not inculcate an ideal of virtue, nor offer unreal pictures of vice punished and virtue rewarded. They are fraught with the lessons of experience and worldly wisdom, they paint life as

the grown man finds it, not as the child or the saint dreams it; and, if they scarcely constitute a guide to heaven, they furnish an effective indication of the snares and pitfalls set by the less worthy of his fellows in the path of the unwary on earth. For his subjects La Fontaine is indebted to many sources, Greek, Latin, Hindoo, which have already been mentioned in the account of the Roman du Renard and the mediaeval fabliaux, as also to the current of popular tradition from which these old French poems themselves so largely drew, and which still flowed on in La Fontaine's day, as indeed it does in our own. But the genius of La Fontaine so revivified these old stories as to make of the fable a recognized literary form, the omission of which from Boileau's enumeration in the Art poétique has remained an unsolved enigma for the commentators.

LE CHARTIER 1 EMBOURBÉ

Le Phaéton ² d'une voiture à foin Vit son char embourbé. Le pauvre homme était loin De tout humain secours : c'était à la campagne, Près d'un certain canton de la Basse-Bretagne,

Appelé Quimper-Corentin.

On sait assez que le Destin

Adresse 3 là les gens quand il veut qu'on enrage:

Dieu nous préserve du voyage!

Pour venir au chartier embourbé dans ces lieux,

Le voilà qui déteste 4 et jure de son mieux,

Pestant, en sa fureur extrême,

Tantôt contre les trous, puis contre les chevaux,

Contre son char, contre lui-même.

Il invoque à la fin le dieu dont les travaux

Sont si célèbres dans le monde:

Hercule, lui dit-il, aide-moi; si ton dos

¹ Now charretier.

² Humorous designation of the carter, from the familiar classical story of Phaeton.

³ 'sends'.

⁴ 'scolds'.

A porté la machine ronde,¹
Ton bras peut me tirer d'ici.

Sa prière étant faite, il entend dans la nue

Une voix qui lui parle ainsi : Hercule veut qu'on se remue :

Puis il aide les gens. Regarde d'où provient L'achoppement qui te retient;

Ote d'autour de chaque roue

Ce malheureux mortier, cette maudite boue Qui iusqu'à l'essieu les enduit:

Prends ton pic, et me romps ce caillou qui te nuit; Comble-moi cette ornière. As-tufait? — Oui, dit l'homme. — Or bien je vas t'aider, dit la voix; prends ton fouet. — Je l'ai pris... Qu'est ceci? mon char marche à souhait! Hercule en soit loué! Lors la voix: Tu vois comme Tes chevaux aisément se sont tirés de là

Aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera.

LE LION DEVENU VIEUX

Le lion, terreur des forêts, Chargé d'ans, et pleurant son antique prouesse, Fut enfin attaqué par ses propres sujets,

Devenus forts par sa faiblesse.

Le cheval s'approchant lui donne un coup de pied;

Le loup, un coup de dent; le bœuf, un coup de corne.

Le malheureux lion, languissant, triste et morne,

Peut à peine rugir, par l'âge estropié.

Il attend son destin, sans faire aucunes plaintes;

Quand, voyant l'âne même à son antre accourir:

Ah! c'est trop, lui dit-il; je voulais bien mourir;

Mais c'est mourir deux fois que souffrir tes atteintes.

¹ The world, of the burden of which Hercules relieved Atlas for a brief while.

LE COQ ET LE RENARD 1

Sur la branche d'un arbre était en sentinelle Un vieux coq adroit et matois.

Frère, dit un renard, adoucissant sa voix,

Nous ne sommes plus en querelle;

Paix générale cette fois.

Je viens te l'annoncer; descends, que je t'embrasse: Ne me retarde point, de grâce;

Je dois faire aujourd'hui vingt postes sans manquer.

Les tiens et toi peuvent vaquer, Sans nulle crainte, à vos affaires; Nous vous y servirons en frères. Faites-en les feux ² dès ce soir, Et cependant viens recevoir Le baiser d'amour fraternelle.

Ami, reprit le coq, je ne pouvais jamais Apprendre une plus douce et meilleure nouvelle

Que celle
De cette paix;

Et ce m'est une double joie

De la tenir de toi. Je vois deux lévriers,

Qui, je m'assure, sont courriers

Que pour ce suiet on envoie:

Ils vont vite, et seront dans un moment à nous. Je descends: nous pourrons nous entre-baiser tous. Adieu, dit le renard, ma traite est longue à faire: Nous nous réjouirons du succès de l'affaire Une autre fois. Le galant aussitôt

> Cf. p. 87, Reynard and the Tom-tit. Bonfires to celebrate the peace.

Tire ses grègues ¹, gagne au haut,²
Mal content de son stratagème.
Et notre vieux coq en soi-même
Se mit à rire de sa peur;
Car c'est double plaisir de tromper le trompeur.

LE CHÊNE ET LE BOSEAU

Le chêne un jour dit au roseau : Vous avez bien sujet d'accuser la nature ; Un roitelet pour vous est un pesant fardeau :

Le moindre vent qui d'aventure Fait rider la face de l'eau Vous oblige à baisser la tête:

Cependant que mon front au Caucase pareil, Non content d'arrêter les rayons du soleil,

Brave l'effort de la tempête.

Tout vous est aquilon, tout me semble zéphyr;

Encor si vous naissiez à l'abri du feuillage

Dont je couvre le voisinage, Vous n'auriez pas tant à souffrir; Je vous défendrais de l'orage;

Mais vous naissez le plus souvent Sur les humides bords des royaumes du vent. La nature envers vous me semble bien injuste. Votre compassion, lui répondit l'arbuste, Part d'un bon naturel; mais quittez ce souci: Les vents me sont moins qu'à vous redoutables; Je plie, et ne romps pas. Vous avez jusqu'ici

> Contre leurs coups épouvantables Résisté sans courber le dos;

2 'makes for the heights.'

 $^{^1}$ $\it gregues,$ a kind of breeches, trunk-hose. The expression means 'takes to his heels'.

Mais attendons la fin. Comme il disait ces mots, Du bout de l'horizon accourt avec furie

Le plus terrible des enfants

Que le nord eût portés jusque-là dans ses flancs.

L'arbre tient bon; le roseau plie. Le vent redouble ses efforts,

Et fait si bien qu'il déracine

Celui de qui la tête au ciel était voisine,

Et dont les pieds touchaient à l'empire des morts.

LES ANIMAUX MALADES DE LA PESTE

Un mal qui répand la terreur,
Mal que le ciel en sa fureur
Inventa pour punir les crimes de la terre,
La peste (puisqu'il faut l'appeler par son nom),
Capable d'enrichir en un jour l'Achéron,

Faisait aux animaux la guerre.

Ils ne mouraient pas tous, mais tous étaient frappés:

On n'en voyait point d'occupés

A chercher le soutien d'une mourante vie;

Nul mets n'excitait leur envie; Ni loups ni renards n'épiaient

Ni loups ni renards n'epiaient La douce et l'innocente proie:

Les tourterelles se fuyaient;

Plus d'amour, partant plus de joie.

Le lion tint conseil, et dit: Mes chers amis, Je crois que le ciel a permis

Pour nos péchés cette infortune.

Que le plus coupable de nous

Se sacrifie aux traits du céleste courroux; Peut-être il obtiendra la guérison commune.

L'histoire nous apprend qu'en de tels accidents

On fait de pareils dévouements.

Ne nous flattons donc point; voyons sans indulgence L'état de notre conscience.

Pour moi, satisfaisant mes appétits gloutons. J'ai dévoré force moutons.

Que m'avaient-ils fait ? nulle offense :

Même il m'est arrivé quelquefois de manger Le berger.

Je me dévouerai donc, s'il le faut : mais je pense Qu'il est bon que chacun s'accuse ainsi que moi : Car on doit souhaiter, selon toute justice,

Que le plus coupable périsse.

Sire, dit le renard, vous êtes trop bon roi; Vos scrupules font voir trop de délicatesse.

Eh bien! manger moutons, canaille, sotte espèce,

Est-ce un péché? Non, non. Vous leur fîtes, seigneur,

En les croquant, beaucoup d'honneur; Et quant au berger, l'on peut dire Qu'il était digne de tous maux,

Étant de ces gens-là qui sur les animaux Se font un chimérique empire.

Ainsi dit le renard: et flatteurs d'applaudir.

On n'osa trop approfondir

Du tigre, ni de l'ours, ni des autres puissances, Les moins pardonnables offenses:

Tous les gens querelleurs, jusqu'aux simples mâtins,

Au dire de chacun, étaient de petits saints. L'âne vint à son tour, et dit : J'ai souvenance

Qu'en un pré de moines passant,

La faim, l'occasion, l'herbe tendre, et, je pense, Quelque diable aussi me poussant,

Je tondis de ce pré la largeur de ma langue; Je n'en avais nul droit, puisqu'il faut parler net.

A ces mots, on cria haro 1 sur le baudet.

'All cried out upon the cuddy.' Haro was the cry with which

Un loup, quelque peu clerc, prouva par sa harangue Qu'il fallait dévouer ce maudit animal, Ce pelé, ce galeux, d'où venait tout le mal. Sa peccadille fut jugée un cas pendable. Manger l'herbe d'autrui! quel crime abominable!

Rien que la mort n'était capable D'expier son forfait. On le lui fit bien voir.

Selon que vous serez puissant ou misérable, Les jugements de cour ¹ vous rendront blanc ou noir.

LE HÉRON

Un jour, sur ses longs pieds, allait je ne sais où, Le héron au long bec emmanché d'un long cou. Il côtovait une rivière.

L'onde était transparente ainsi qu'aux plus beaux jours; Ma commère la carpe y faisait mille tours

Avec le brochet son compère.

Le héron en eût fait aisément son profit:

Tous approchaient du bord; l'oiseau n'avait qu'à
prendre.

Mais il crut mieux faire d'attendre Qu'il eût un peu plus d'appétit. Il vivait de régime et mangeait à ses heures. Après quelques moments l'appétit vint : l'oiseau, S'approchant du bord, vit sur l'eau Des tanches qui sortaient du fond de ces demeures

one claimed justice in Normandy, or with which one summoned before the judge him whom one accused of injustice. The fanciful derivation from ah, Raoul! supposed to be an invocation of Rollon, the first Duke of Normandy, celebrated for his justice, will scarcely hold water. Diez's derivation would make the word cognate with the English 'here', through the Anglo-Saxon. It would thus be a cry for help.

1 The law-courts.

Le mets ne lui plut pas : il s'attendait à mieux, Et montrait un goût dédaigneux, Comme le rat ¹ du bon ² Horace.

Comme le rat l' du bon l' Horace.

Moi, des tanches! dit-il: moi, héron, que je fasse
Une si pauvre chère! Et pour qui me prend-on?
La tanche rebutée, il trouva du goujon.
Du goujon! C'est bien là le dîner d'un héron!
J'ouvrirais pour si peu le bec! aux dieux ne plaise!
Il l'ouvrit pour bien moins: tout alla de façon
Qu'il ne vit plus aucun poisson.

La faim le prit : il fut tout heureux et tout aise De rencontrer un limaçon.

Ne soyons pas si difficiles; Les plus accommodants, ce sont les plus habiles: On hasarde de perdre en voulant trop gagner.

Gardez-vous de rien dédaigner, Surtout quand vous avez à peu près votre compte.

i.e. the town-rat in the familiar story of the 'town-rat and the country-rat'.

2 bon here translates the Lat. optimus. 'excellent, witty'.

CHAPTER II

THE DIVINES

JACQUES-BÉNIGNE BOSSUET (1627-1704) came of a family of magistrates. Himself early destined for the Church, he first pursued his studies in the college of the Jesuits in his native city of Dijon, where his gifts and his application already gave promise of a brilliant career. At the age of fifteen he was sent to complete his studies to the College of Navarre, at Paris. He steeped himself in the study of the Greeks and the Romans, and his writings throughout are so impregnated with the thoughts and the language of the Scriptures that it is not hard to believe the tradition that he knew the Bible by heart. At the age of sixteen he was introduced to the Hôtel de Rambouillet, and preached there a sermon which was greatly admired. Having graduated doctor in theology and been ordained priest in 1652, he was sent into Lorraine at the head of a band of priests whose mission was to attempt the conversion of the Protestants of that province. Thus was inaugurated what was to be the task of his life, the defence of the Christian faith, as he understood it, and to that end his writings, whether they were polemical tracts, philosophical treatises, sermons, or histories, with few exceptions all tended. Summoned to Paris in 1657 he preached the Lent sermons during three successive years, and in 1661 was summoned to preach before the King at the Louvre. In 1669 he was chosen to deliver the funeral oration for the French princess Henrietta, the widow of Charles I of England, and was rewarded for that oratorical triumph by the bishopric of Condom, and soon afterwards by his appointment as tutor to the Dauphin. This was in 1670, and the royal pupil was then nine years old. During the next ten years Bossuet concentrated all his activities on his new task. He himself wrote for the use of his pupil a great variety of works, which include some of his most notable contributions to literature, e.g. the Traité de la connaissance de Dieu et de soimême, the Politique tirée de l'Écriture sainte, and the famous Discours sur l'histoire universelle. In 1681, the education of the Dauphin being completed, Bossuet was nominated to the bishopric of Meaux. The remainder of his life was almost exclusively devoted to contributions to the various theological controversies of the day, and to writing in defence of the Catholic faith, which occupied him without intermission almost till his last breath

THE SETTING OF ONE OF BOSSUET'S FUNERAL ORATIONS

The pomp and majesty of style which Bossuet affects in the Oraisons funèbres are in striking disaccord with the general tendency of the seventeenth century to measure and restraint, and the critics familiar with a soberer style of eloquence have found them unduly magniloquent. But we must remember that the French have always, and never more than in the grand siècle, been given to splendid ceremony, and any less elevated diction would have been so strangely out of keeping with the material pomp and circumstance with which princely funerals were at that time celebrated as to have formed little less than an anti-climax. The reader will form some idea of what that pomp and circumstance was, and will be the better able to imagine for himself the appropriate setting for Bossuet's lofty eloquence, from the following summary description, drawn from contemporary sources, of the obsequies of Henrietta of England.

The great main door of the church was draped with black, with the arms of the dead princess, painted and gilt, six feet high, supported on either side by a skeleton of white marble, seated, with wings, and shrouded in a winding-sheet, who held a canopy above the arms. On either side of the door were other two such figures, bearing similar arms, linked with festoons of velvet, studded with tears of silver, and deeply fringed. The rood-loft was surmounted with a huge candelabrum, whose branches bore forty great torches of white wax. The church within was all draped with black cloth, and the arcades hung with black curtains, which were held back by other skeletons of white marble. In the middle of the choir stood the mausoleum, on a platform approached by eight steps, at each corner of which, on a pedestal

al to livem

of white marble, stood an altar of antique form, bearing a great urn smoking with incense. The choir was peopled with a host of elaborate allegorical figures. The body of the princess lay above a catafalque of black marble, adorned with silver-gilt, supported by four great bronze leopards on pedestals of jasper, the coffin being covered with cloth of gold, edged with ermine, on which lay the ducal mantle and crown. This catafalque was surrounded by three hundred chandeliers with white wax tapers, and above all hung a sumptuous canopy. All the windows were hung with black cloth, so that the interior of the church was shrouded in deep gloom, until, when the royal mourners had taken their places, the tapers were all kindled, and huge flames leapt up from the smoking urns, revealing in the array of funereal splendour the 'long-drawn aisles and fretted vaults' which were to echo to the solemn, stately periods of the orator.

ORAISON FUNÈBRE DE HENRIETTE-MARIE DE FRANCE ¹

Et nunc, reges, intelligite; erudimini, qui iudicatis terram. Maintenant, ô rois, apprenez; instruisez-vous, juges de la terre. Ps. ii. 10.

Monseigneur,2

Celui qui règne dans les cieux, et de qui relèvent tous les empires, à qui seul appartient la gloire, la majesté et l'indépendance, est aussi le seul qui se glorifie de faire la loi aux rois, et de leur donner, quand il lui plaît, de grandes et de terribles leçons. Soit qu'il élève les trônes, soit qu'il les abaisse, soit qu'il communique sa puissance aux princes, soit qu'il la retire à lui-même et ne leur laisse que leur propre faiblesse, il leur apprend leurs devoirs d'une manière souveraine et digne de lui. Car, en

¹ Daughter of Henri IV of France and Marie de Médicis, and wife of Charles I of England. She died in almost monastic seclusion at Colombes in 1669.

² The person addressed was Philippe, duc d'Orléans, only brother of Louis XIV, and son-in-law of Charles I of England and the dead Queen.

leur donnant sa puissance, il leur commande d'en user comme il fait lui-même pour le bien du monde; et il leur fait voir, en la retirant, que toute leur majesté est empruntée, et que, pour être assis sur le trône, ils n'en sont pas moins sous sa main, et sous son autorité suprême. C'est ainsi qu'il instruit les princes, non seulement par ses discours et par ses paroles, mais encore par des effets et des exemples: Et nunc, reges, intelligite; erudimini, qui indicatis terram.

Chrétiens, que la mémoire d'une grande Reine, fille, femme, mère de rois si puissants, et souveraine de trois royaumes, appelle de tous côtés à cette triste cérémonie : ce discours vous fera paraître un de ces exemples redoutables, qui étalent aux veux du monde sa vanité toute entière Vous verrez dans une seule vie toutes les extrémités des choses humaines: la félicité sans bornes. aussi bien que les misères; une longue et paisible jouissance d'une des plus nobles couronnes de l'univers ; tout ce que peuvent donner de plus glorieux la naissance et la grandeur accumulé sur une tête qui ensuite est exposée à tous les outrages de la fortune : la bonne cause d'abord suivie de bons succès, et depuis, des retours soudains, des changements inouïs; la rébellion longtemps retenue, à la fin tout à fait maîtresse; nul frein à la licence : les lois abolies; la majesté violée par des attentats jusqu'alors inconnus; l'usurpation et la tyrannie sous le nom de liberté; une reine fugitive, qui ne trouve aucune retraite dans trois royaumes, et à qui sa propre patrie n'est plus qu'un triste lieu d'exil; neuf voyages sur mer, entrepris par une princesse, malgré les tempêtes; l'Océan étonné de se voir traversé tant de fois en des appareils si divers, et pour des causes si différentes; un trône indignement renversé, et miraculeusement rétabli. Voilà les enseignements que Dieu donne aux rois; ainsi fait-il voir au monde le néant de ses pompes et de ses grandeurs. Si les paroles nous manquent, si les expressions ne répondent pas à un sujet si vaste et si relevé, les choses parleront assez d'elles-mêmes. Le cœur d'une grande reine, autrefois élevé ¹ par une assez longue suite de prospérités, et puis plongé tout à coup dans un abîme d'amertumes, parlera assez haut; et s'il n'est pas permis aux particuliers de faire des leçons aux princes sur des événements si étranges, un roi me prête ses paroles pour leur dire: Et nunc, reges, intelligite; erudimini, qui iudicatis terram: 'Entendez, ô grands de la terre; instruisez-vous, arbitres du monde.'

('But this wise and religious princess, offered by God as a spectacle wherein men might study the counsels of divine Providence, instructed herself whilst God was instructing princes by her example. She made a Christian use alike of good and evil fortune, showing herself in the one beneficent, in the other invincible.' The preacher then reviews the great qualities of the deceased Queen: her glorious birth; her great heart, which surpassed her birth: her marriage, not below her birth and her merit, which united the house of France with the royal family of the Stuarts, itself descended from ancient kings whose origin is lost in the night of time: her munificence, her gracious condescension: her prudence in statecraft: her constancy in her religion; her conjugal love and fidelity. He compares her influence upon her husband exercised in favour of the persecuted Catholics with that of Esther upon Ahasuerus in favour of the Jews. He enumerates her services to France, with which country she has reconciled the King her husband and the King her son. Then he passes to the story of her signal misfortunes. This he opens with a eulogy on Charles I.)

Charles I^{er}, roi d'Angleterre, était juste, modéré, magnanime, très instruit de ses affaires et des moyens de régner. Jamais prince ne fut plus capable de rendre la royauté non seulement vénérable et sainte, mais encore

¹ Not 'educated' but 'elated'.

aimable et chère à ses peuples. Que lui peut-on reprocher, sinon la clémence ? Je veux bien avouer de lui ce qu'un auteur¹ célèbre a dit de César, qu'il a été clément jusqu'à être obligé de s'en repentir : 'Caesari proprium et pecu liare sit clementiae insigne, qua usque ad poenitentiam omnes superavit.' Que ce soit donc là, si l'on veut, l'il lustre défaut de Charles aussi bien que de César : mais que ceux qui veulent croire que tout est faible dans les malheureux et dans les vaincus ne pensent pas pour cela nous persuader que la force ait manqué à son courage, ni la vigueur à ses conseils. Poursuivi à toute outrance par l'implacable malignité de la fortune, trahi de tous les siens, il ne s'est pas manqué à lui-même. Malgré les mauvais succès de ses armes infortunées, si l'on a pu le vaincre, on n'a pas pu le forcer; et comme il n'a jamais refusé ce qui était raisonnable étant vainqueur, il a toujours rejeté ce qui était faible et injuste étant captif. J'ai peine à contempler son grand cœur dans ces dernières épreuves. Mais certes il a montré qu'il n'est pas permis aux rebelles de faire perdre la majesté à un roi qui sait se connaître; et ceux qui ont vu de quel front il a paru dans la salle de Westminster et dans la place de Whitehall peuvent juger aisément combien il était intrépide à la tête de ses armées, combien auguste et majestueux au milieu de son palais et de sa cour. Grande reine,2 je satisfais à vos plus tendres désirs, quand je célèbre ce monarque; et ce cœur, qui n'a jamais vécu que pour lui, se réveille, tout poudre qu'il est, et devient sensible, même sous ce drap mortuaire, au nom d'un époux si cher, à qui ses ennemis mêmes accorderont le titre de sage et celui de juste, et que la postérité mettra au rang

Pliny

² One can imagine the thrill that would run through the assembly at this apostrophe of the dead queen who lay coffined in their midst.

des grands princes, si son histoire trouve des lecteurs dont le jugement ne se laisse pas maîtriser aux événements ni à la fortune.

('Such having been the character of Charles, to what are we to attribute the recent sacrilegious excesses? To the indomitable pride of the nation? No! for consider how absolute, how feared, were not only the kings of full age, but even those who were in pupilage, even the queens; consider with what incredible ease religion was overthrown or re-established by Henry, by Edward, by Mary, by Elizabeth. Let us not then accuse blindly the nature of the inhabitants of the most illustrious island in the world, nor lightly believe that the Gaulish, Mercian, Danish, and Saxon stocks have let the good blood which our fathers mingled with them grow so corrupt as to be capable of being carried away to such barbarous proceedings, without other causes. What then are these causes? False religions, free-thought, the rage of disputing concerning sacred things. In a word, the Reformation.' The preacher enlarges on this theme, and draws the conclusion that God, to punish their religious instability, has delivered them over to the intemperance of their own foolish curiosity. Bossuet then gives his estimate of Cromwell.)

Un homme s'est rencontré d'une profondeur d'esprit incroyable, hypocrite raffiné autant qu'habile politique, capable de tout entreprendre et de tout cacher, également actif et infatigable dans la paix et dans la guerre, qui ne laissait rien à la fortune de ce qu'il pouvait lui ôter par conseil et par prévoyance; mais au reste si vigilant et si prêt à tout, qu'il n'a jamais manqué les occasions qu'elle lui a présentées; enfin un de ces esprits remuants et audacieux qui semblent être nés pour changer le monde. Que le sort de tels esprits est hasardeux, et qu'il en paraît dans l'histoire à qui leur audace a été funeste! Mais aussi que ne font-ils pas quand il plaît à Dieu de s'en servir? Il fut donné à celui-ci de tromper les peuples, et de prévaloir contre les rois. Car comme il eut aperçu que, dans ce mélange infini des sectes qui n'avaient

plus de règles certaines, le plaisir de dogmatiser sans être repris ni contraint par aucune autorité ecclésiastique ni séculière était le charme qui possédait les esprits, il sut si bien les concilier par là, qu'il fit un corps redoutable de cet assemblage monstrueux. Quand une fois on a trouvé le moven de prendre la multitude par l'appât de la liberté, elle suit en aveugle, pourvu qu'elle en entende seulement le nom. Ceux-ci, occupés du premier objet qui les avait transportés, allaient toujours sans regarder qu'ils allaient à la servitude : et leur subtil conducteur. qui, en combattant, en dogmatisant, en mêlant mille personnages divers, en faisant le docteur et le prophète, aussi bien que le soldat et le capitaine, vit qu'il avait tellement enchanté le monde, qu'il était regardé de toute l'armée comme un chef envoyé de Dieu pour la protection de l'indépendance, commenca à s'apercevoir qu'il pouvait encore les pousser plus loin. Je ne vous raconterai pas la suite trop fortunée de ses entreprises, ni ses fameuses victoires dont la vertu était indignée, ni cette longue tranquillité qui a étonné l'univers. C'était le conseil de Dieu d'instruire les rois à ne point quitter son Église.

(Bossuet then reviews the part played by Henrietta in the Civil War: her negotiations, her voyages across the winter sea, her march as a general at the head of a victorious army, the unlooked-for reverse in the royal fortunes after the sieges of Hull and Gloucester, her flight to France, her efforts to stir up divers States to succour her husband, the final collapse of the cause, and her pious resignation to the will of Heaven, followed after ten years, as if in answer to her prayers, by the miracle of the Restoration. The peroration is as follows:)

Elle est morte, cette grande reine! et par sa mort elle a laissé un regret éternel, non seulement à Monsieur et à Madame,¹ qui, fidèles à tous leurs devoirs, ont eu pour

¹ i.e. her son-in-law, the Duke of Orleans, and her daughter, Henrietta Maria of France.

elle des respects si soumis, si sincères, si persévérants, mais encore à tous ceux qui ont eu l'honneur de la servir ou de la connaître. Ne plaignons plus ses disgrâces¹, qui font maintenant sa félicité. Si elle avait été plus fortunée, son histoire serait plus pompeuse, mais ses œuvres seraient moins pleines; et avec des titres superbes elle aurait peut-être paru vide devant Dieu. Maintenant qu'elle a préféré la croix au trône, et qu'elle a mis ses malheurs au nombre des plus grandes grâces, elle recevra les consolations qui sont promises à ceux qui pleurent. Puisse donc ce Dieu de miséricorde accepter ses afflictions en sacrifice agréable! Puisse-t-il la placer au sein d'Abraham; et, content de ses maux, épargner désormais à sa famille et au monde de si terribles lecons!

ARTS INVENTED BY THE EGYPTIANS

(From the Histoire universelle.)

Il y en² a de très importants dont on ne peut leur disputer l'invention. Comme leur pays était uni,³ et leur ciel toujours pur et sans nuages, ils ont été les premiers à observer le cours des astres. Ils ont aussi les premiers réglé l'année. Ces observations les ont jetés naturellement dans l'arithmétique; et s'il est vrai, ce que dit Platon, que le soleil et la lune aient enseigné aux hommes la science des nombres, c'est-à-dire qu'on ait commencé les comptes réglés par celui des jours, des mois et des ans, les Égyptiens sont les premiers qui aient écouté ces merveilleux maîtres. Les planètes et les autres astres ne leur ont pas été moins connus, et ils ont trouvé cette grande année qui ramène tout le ciel à son premier point.

Pour reconnaître leurs terres, tous les ans couvertes

^{1 &#}x27;misfortunes.' 2 sc. des arts. 3 'flat'.

par le débordement du Nil, ils ont été obligés de recourir à l'arpentage, qui leur a bientôt appris la géométrie. Ils étaient grands observateurs de la nature, qui, dans un air serein et sous un soleil si ardent, était forte et féconde parmi eux. C'est aussi ce qui leur a fait inventer ou perfectionner la médecine.

Ainsi, toutes les sciences ont été en grand honneur parmi eux. Les inventeurs des choses utiles recevaient, et de leur vivant et après leur mort, de dignes récompenses de leurs travaux... Le premier de tous les peuples où on voie des bibliothèques est celui d'Égypte. Le titre qu'on leur donnait inspirait l'envie d'y entrer et d'en pénétrer les secrets: on les appelait le trésor des remèdes de l'âme. Elle s'y guérissait de l'ignorance, la plus dangereuse de ses maladies et la source de toutes les autres.

Francois de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon (1651-1715) came of a noble but sorely impoverished family. In his father's house he was imbued with a love of classical literature: he continued the study of the humanities and commenced that of philosophy at the University of Cahors, was initiated into the study of theology at the Collège Duplessis at Paris, entered the seminary or priests' college of Saint-Sulpice, and was ordained priest at the age of twenty-four. Externally his career presents many points of similarity with that of Bossuet. Like him, he had a precocious success as a preacher, like him he was charged with a mission for the conversion of Protestants in the provinces (1685), like him he became the tutor of a prince (the Duke of Burgundy) who was in the direct line of the succession but was destined never to reign, and like him he wrote several of his bestknown works for the edification of his royal pupil. He was elected to the French Academy in 1693, appointed to the Abbey of Saint-Valéry in 1694, and promoted to the Archbishopric of Cambrai in 1695. His sympathy with the mystical doctrines of the Quietists involved him in a bitter polemic with Bossuet and provoked his estrangement with the King. The publication,

unauthorised by Fénelon himself, of his Télémaque, which was hailed by political malcontents, with some show of reason, as a satire on Louis and his reign, transformed this estrangement into positive disfavour and effectually checked his further advancement. The not ill-founded hopes which it is to be presumed he cherished of vet playing a prominent rôle in the political life of his country, hopes based on his unshaken influence with his pupil the Duke of Burgundy, were definitively blighted by the untimely death of the Duke. The remainder of his life was spent, in what was tantamount to exile, in his Archbishopric, in the devoted performance of his pastoral duties and in the waging of a polemic against the Jansenists. His generosity towards the fugitives after the defeat of Malplaquet won him the love of his fellow countrymen and extorted even the reluctant thanks of the King: the victorious foes themselves shared his bounty, in gratitude for which Prince Eugène and the Duke of Marlborough caused his lands to be spared when the neighbouring territories were laid under contribution. He died in 1715 from the results of a carriage-accident. His writings include an early Traité de l'éducation des filles. which testifies to his insight into the nature of children and to a liberality in advance of his time: three Dialogues sur l'éloquence. afterwards developed in his Lettre à l'Académie française, which we may regard as an attempt to reconcile the two parties in the famous Querelle des anciens et des modernes ; a Traité de l'existence de Dieu, in which he first seeks to establish the existence of God from arguments based on the evidences of design in the works of creation, and thereafter by metaphysical reasonings in the manner of Descartes: lastly, prose Fables, Dialogues des Morts, and Télémague. The last three were written for the instruction of his pupil, the Duke of Burgundy.

LES AVENTURES DE TÉLÉMAQUE

The Grotto of Calypso.

On arriva à la porte de la grotte de Calypso, où Télémaque fut surpris de voir, avec une apparence de simplicité rustique, tout ce qui peut charmer les yeux. On n'y voyait ni or, ni argent, ni marbre, ni colonnes ni

tableaux, ni statues : cette grotte était taillée dans le roc, en voûtes pleines de rocailles et de coquilles : elle était tapissée d'une jeune vigne, qui étendait ses branches souples également de tous côtés. Les doux zéphyrs conservaient en ce lieu, malgré les ardeurs du soleil, une délicieuse fraîcheur : des fontaines, coulant avec un doux murmure sur des prés semés d'amaranthes et de violettes, formaient en divers lieux des bains aussi purs et aussi clairs que le cristal : mille fleurs naissantes émaillaient les tapis verts dont la grotte était environnée. Là, on trouvait un bois de ces arbres touffus qui portent des pommes d'or, et dont la fleur, qui se renouvelle dans toutes les saisons, répand le plus doux de tous les parfums; ce bois semblait couronner ces belles prairies, et formait une nuit que les rayons du soleil ne pouvaient percer; là, on n'entendait jamais que le chant des oiseaux, ou le bruit d'un ruisseau qui, se précipitant du haut d'un rocher, tombait à gros bouillons, pleins d'écume, et s'enfuyait au travers de la prairie.

La grotte de la déesse était sur le penchant d'une colline; de là on découvrait la mer, quelquefois claire et unie comme une glace, quelquefois follement irritée contre les rochers, où elle se brisait en gémissant et élevant ses vagues comme des montagnes : d'un autre côté, on voyait une rivière où se formaient des îles bordées de tilleuls fleuris et de hauts peupliers qui portaient leurs têtes superbes jusque dans les nues. Les divers canaux qui formaient ces îles semblaient se jouer dans la campagne; les uns roulaient leurs eaux claires avec rapidité; d'autres avaient une eau paisible et dormante; d'autres, par de longs détours, revenaient sur leurs pas comme pour remonter vers leur source, et semblaient ne pouvoir quitter ces bords enchantés. On apercevait de loin des collines et des montagnes qui se

perdaient dans les nues, et dont la figure bizarre formait un horizon à souhait pour le plaisir des yeux. Les montagnes voisines étaient couvertes de pampre vert qui pendait en festons: le raisin, plus éclatant que la pourpre, ne pouvait se cacher sous les feuilles, et la vigne était accablée sous son fruit. Le figuier, l'olivier, le grenadier, et tous les autres arbres, couvraient la campagne, et en faisaient un grand jardin.

The Mouth of Hades.

Dans cette peine, il entreprit de descendre aux enfers par un lieu célèbre qui n'était pas éloigné du camp : on l'appelait Achérontia, à cause qu'il y avait en ce lieu une caverne affreuse, de laquelle on descendait sur les rives de l'Achéron, par lequel les dieux mêmes craignent de jurer. La ville était sur un rocher, posée comme un nid sur le haut d'un arbre : au pied de ce rocher on trouvait la caverne, de laquelle les timides mortels n'osaient approcher; les bergers avaient soin d'en détourner leurs troupeaux. La vapeur soufrée du marais stygien, qui s'exhalait sans cesse par cette ouverture. empestait l'air. Tout autour il ne croissait ni herbe ni fleurs; on n'y sentait jamais les doux zéphyrs, ni les grâces naissantes du printemps, ni les riches dons de l'automne: la terre aride y languissait; on y voyait seulement quelques arbustes et quelques cyprès funestes. Au loin même, tout à l'entour, Cérès refusait au laboureur ses moissons dorées. Bacchus semblait en vain y promettre ses doux fruits; les grappes de raisin se desséchaient au lieu de mûrir. Les naïades tristes ne faisaient point couler une onde pure : leurs flots étaient toujours amers et troubles. Les oiseaux ne chantaient jamais dans cette terre hérissée de ronces et d'épines, et n'y trouvaient aucun bocage pour se retirer :

ils allaient chanter leurs amours sous un ciel plus doux. Là on n'entendait que le croassement des corbeaux et la voix lugubre des hiboux; l'herbe même y était amère, et les troupeaux qui la paissaient ne sentaient point la douce joie qui les fait bondir. Le taureau fuyait la génisse, et le berger, tout abattu, oubliait sa musette et sa flûte.

De cette caverne sortait de temps en temps une fumée noire et épaisse, qui faisait une espèce de nuit au milieu du jour. Les peuples voisins redoublaient alors leurs sacrifices pour apaiser les divinités infernales : mais souvent les hommes à la fleur de leur âge, et dès leur plus tendre jeunesse, étaient les seules victimes que ces divinités cruelles prenaient plaisir à immoler par une funeste contagion.

The Elysian Fields.

Télémaque s'avança vers ces rois, qui étaient dans des bocages odoriférants, sur des gazons toujours renaissants et fleuris; mille petits ruisseaux d'une onde pure arrosaient ces beaux lieux et y faisaient sentir une délicieuse fraîcheur : un nombre infini d'oiseaux faisaient résonner ces bocages de leurs doux chants. On voyait tout ensemble les fleurs du printemps qui naissaient sous le pas, avec les plus riches fruits de l'automne qui pendaient des arbres. Là, jamais on ne ressentit les ardeurs de la furieuse canicule ; là, jamais les noirs aquilons n'osèrent souffler, ni faire sentir les rigueurs de l'hiver. Ni la guerre altérée de sang, ni la cruelle envie qui mord d'une dent venimeuse, et qui porte des vipères entortillées dans son sein et autour de ses bras, ni les jalousies, ni les défiances, ni la crainte, ni les vains désirs, n'approchent jamais de cet heureux séjour de la paix. Le jour n'y finit point : et la nuit, avec ses sombres voiles, y est inconnue; une lumière

pure et douce se répand autour des corps de ces hommes justes et les environne de ses ravons comme d'un vêtement. Cette lumière n'est point semblable à la lumière sombre qui éclaire les yeux des misérables mortels, et qui n'est que ténèbres : c'est plutôt une gloire céleste qu'une lumière : elle pénètre plus subtilement les corps les plus épais, que les rayons du soleil ne pénètrent le plus pur cristal: elle n'éblouit jamais: au contraire, elle fortifie les yeux et porte dans le fond de l'âme je ne sais quelle sérénité: c'est d'elle seule que les hommes bienheureux sont nourris : elle sort d'eux et elle v entre : elle les pénètre et s'incorpore à eux comme les aliments s'incorporent à nous. Ils la voient, ils la sentent, ils la respirent : elle fait naître en eux une source intarissable de paix et de joie : ils sont plongés dans cet abîme de délices comme les poissons dans la mer; ils ne veulent plus rien; ils ont tout sans rien avoir, car ce goût de lumière pure apaise la faim de leur cœur ; tous leurs désirs sont rassasiés, et leur plénitude les élève au-dessus de tout ce que les hommes avides et affamés cherchent sur la terre : toutes les délices qui les environnent ne leur sont rien, parce que le comble de leur félicité, qui vient du dedans, ne leur laisse aucun sentiment pour tout ce qu'ils voient de délicieux au dehors; ils sont tels que les dieux, qui, rassasiés de nectar et d'ambroisie, ne daigneraient pas se nourrir des viandes grossières qu'on leur présenterait à la table la plus exquise des hommes mortels. Tous les maux s'enfuient loin de ces lieux tranquilles; la mort, la maladie, la pauvreté, la douleur, les regrets, les remords, les craintes, les espérances même qui coûtent souvent autant de peines que les craintes, les divisions, les dégoûts, les dépits, ne peuvent y avoir aucune entrée. Dans ce ravissement divin, les siècles coulent plus rapidement que les heures parmi les mortels, et cependant mille et mille siècles n'ôtent rien à leur félicité toujours nouvelle et toujours entière. Ils règnent tous ensemble, non sur des trônes que la main des hommes peut renverser, mais en eux-mêmes, avec une puissance immuable : car ils n'ont plus besoin d'être redoutables par une puissance empruntée d'un peuple vil et méprisable. Ils ne portent plus ces vains diadèmes dont l'éclat cache tant de craintes et de noirs soucis ; les dieux mêmes les ont couronnés de leurs propres mains avec des couronnes que rien ne peut flétrir.

LOUIS XI ET PHILIPPE DE COMMINES

(From the 'Dialogues des Morts'. Louis and de Commines are supposed to meet after death amongst the Shades, when the following dialogue ensues. Cf. p. 136.)

Louis. On dit que vous avez écrit mon histoire. Commines. Il est vrai, sire; et j'ai parlé en bon domestique.

Louis. Mais on assure que vous avez écrit bien des choses dont je me passerais volontiers.

Commines. Cela peut être : mais en gros j'ai fait de vous un portrait fort avantageux. Voudriez-vous que j'eusse été un flatteur perpétuel, au lieu d'être un historien ?

Louis. Vous deviez parler de moi comme un sujet comblé des grâces de son maître.

COMMINES. C'eût été le moyen de n'être cru de personne. La reconnaissance n'est pas ce qu'on recherche dans un historien; au contraire, c'est ce qui le rend suspect.

Louis. Pourquoi faut-il qu'il y ait des gens qui aient

la démangeaison d'écrire? Il faut laisser les morts en paix, et ne flétrir point leur mémoire.

COMMINES. La vôtre était étrangement noircie; j'ai tâché d'adoucir les impressions déjà faites; j'ai relevé toutes vos bonnes qualités: je vous ai déchargé de toutes les choses odieuses qu'on vous imputait sans preuves décisives. Que pouvais-je faire de mieux?

Louis. Ou vous taire, ou me défendre en tout. On dit que vous avez représenté toutes mes grimaces, toutes mes contorsions lorsque je parlais tout seul, toutes mes intrigues avec de petites gens. On dit que vous avez parlé du crédit de mon prévôt, de mon barbier et de mon tailleur : vous avez étalé mes vieux habits. On dit que vous n'avez pas oublié mes petites dévotions, surtout à la fin de mes jours ; mon empressement à ramasser des reliques; à me faire frotter, depuis la tête jusqu'aux pieds, de l'huile de la sainte ampoule, et à faire des pèlerinages où je prétendais toujours avoir été guéri. Vous avez fait mention de ma barrette chargée de petits saints, et de ma petite Notre-Dame de plomb, que je baisais dès que je voulais faire un mauvais coup; enfin de la croix de Saint-Lô, par laquelle je n'osais jurer sans vouloir garder mon serment, parce que i'aurais cru mourir dans l'année si j'y avais manqué. Tout cela est fort ridicule.

COMMINES. Tout cela n'est-il pas vrai? pouvais-je le taire?

Louis. Vous pouviez n'en rien dire.

COMMINES. Vous pouviez n'en rien faire.

Louis. Mais cela était fait, et il ne fallait pas le dire.

COMMINES. Mais cela était fait, et je ne pouvais le cacher à la postérité.

Louis. Quoi! ne peut-on pas cacher certaines choses? Commines. Hé! croyez-vous qu'un roi puisse être

caché après sa mort comme vous cachiez certaines intrigues pendant votre vie ? Je n'aurais rien sauvé pour vous par mon silence, et je me serais déshonoré. Contentez-vous ¹ que je pouvais dire bien pis et être cru; mais je ne l'ai pas voulu faire.

Louis. Quoi ! l'histoire ne doit-elle pas respecter les rois ?

COMMINES. Les rois ne doivent-ils pas respecter l'histoire et la postérité, à la censure de laquelle ils ne peuvent échapper? Ceux qui veulent qu'on ne parle pas mal d'eux n'ont qu'une seule ressource, qui est de bien faire.

¹ Modern French would require here the insertion of de ce.

CHAPTER III

THE MORALISTS

ALL the classical authors of the seventeenth century are moralists at heart. The two most characteristic movements of the century both alike conspired to promote an absorbing interest in the analysis of the human mind and character. On the one hand the religious revival which followed the materialism induced by a prolonged period of civil and religious anarchy was naturally accompanied by inquiry into the moral nature of man. And on the other hand the new development of the social spirit which was fostered by the restoration of tranquillity, and found expression in the life of the Court and of the salons, necessarily encouraged the study of character, alike in a man's self and in his fellows, upon a right reading of which social success depends. Of the three most distinguished moralists in title of the seventeenth century, Pascal, La Rochefoucauld and La Bruvère, the former is inspired by religious zeal, whilst the two latter are products of the society which they mirror in their writings. The very forms into which they cast their observations, the 'Maxims' of La Rochefoucauld and the 'Characters' of La Bruvère, had originated, along with énigmes, bouts rimés, madrigaux and the like, as a fashionable diversion of the salons. Pascal, La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère agree in painting a far from flattering portrait of man, but they start with widely different motives. Pascal seeks to disgust man with himself, and so throw him back in despair upon the saving grace of God. La Rochefoucauld, the contemptuous 'grand seigneur' and soured political intriguer, takes a malicious pleasure in unmasking man and showing him to himself in his naked ugliness. Nay, he cannot resist the temptation consistently to blacken the picture. La Bruyère seeks to amuse rather than to mortify his fellows by his portrayal of their weaknesses and their follies, and is not without hope that they may thereby be induced to amend themselves

BLAISE PASCAL (1623-62). A biography of Pascal would scarcely be intelligible without a preliminary account, however brief, of the religious community of Port-Royal, his association with which gave the decisive bias to his life. Founded in 1204. in the valley of Chevreuse, some eighteen miles from Paris, Port-Royal was originally a Cistercian abbey, into which with the lapse of time there had crept the spirit of worldliness which assailed religious communities in general. In 1608 it was reformed by Angélique Arnauld, 'la mère Angélique,' whose own appointment as abbess six years earlier, at the age of eleven, was a signal instance of the manner in which the foundation had been perverted from its purpose. Yet from this abuse grew the remedy. After some years of worldly gaiety, the child abbess grown to womanhood awoke to a spiritual life, and restored the community to its original simplicity and severity. The sisterhood was for a time transferred to Paris, where, under the influence of her spiritual director, l'abbé de Saint-Cyran, Mother Angelica adopted the religious tenets of Jansen¹. Meanwhile there had gathered around Saint-Cyran a group of devoted disciples, including several kinsmen of Mother Angelica, also imbued with the doctrines of Jansenism, and they settled in the deserted abbey, to lead, without being bound by any monastic vow, a life of religious contemplation. When the sisterhood returned to Port-Royal-des-Champs, as their first abode was now called, the recluses retired to a farm known as Port-Royal-des-Granges in the same valley. Some were men who had cut a considerable figure in the world. Now they voluntarily submitted themselves

¹ A Dutch theologian, b. 1585, d. 1638.

to the monastic routine, performed manual labour in the fields, wrote, and in particular devoted themselves to the education of children, Jean Racine being their most distinguished pupil. In this last capacity of school-keepers they became the rivals of the Jesuits, who held what was practically a monopoly of education in France. Thus they incurred the hostility of this powerful order, which devoted itself, in the end successfully, to their destruction. The Jansenists held certain theological beliefs, on the questions of predestination and grace, which were akin to those of the Calvinists, whom they further resembled in the austerity of their lives. The Jesuits attacked them through these doctrines, of which they procured the condemnation by the Pope.

Pascal was born at Clermont-Ferrand in Auvergne. father, who was himself interested in physics and mathematics, at first excluded the latter subject from the plan of studies which he traced for his son, fearing lest the natural ardour which he showed for it might lead to the injury of his health. But he found to his amaze that the twelve-year-old boy had with his own unaided powers re-discovered the elements of geometry as far as Euclid's thirty-second proposition. Mathematical and physical studies, for which he had shown such a startlingly precocious gift, occupied him pre-eminently until his thirty-sixth year, and his treatises and discoveries in this field would in themselves have earned him immortal fame. The train of circumstances which flung him into the controversy of the Jansenists and Jesuits gave a new turn to his life and made him one of the foremost of French prose writers. Pascal himself, his two sisters and his father, came under the influence of a friend and disciple of Saint-Cyran, and Jacqueline Pascal actually joined the nuns of Port-Royal. But Pascal relapsed for a while into worldly dissipation, until a carriage-accident, when he saw himself on the brink of death, followed by a night of religious ecstasy, completed his conversion, and he, too, became one of the most ardent members of the brotherhood of Port-Royal. The Jansenists were at the time hard-pressed by their enemies, and Pascal was charged with the task of drawing up their defence and conciliating public opinion in their favour. This he did in a series of anonymous pamphlets known as the Lettres provinciales. In the earlier letters he defended the Jansenists against the charge of heresy. in the later ones he carried the war into the enemies' camp and exposed the casuistic morality of his opponents. The style of these letters, now coldly clear and logical, now rising to a tone of impassioned eloquence, and again borrowing the weapons of satire and irony, makes of them one of the most notable monuments of the French language. Their success was such as to win a fleeting triumph for the ill-fated Jansenist cause. Pascal's chief contribution to French literature after the *Provinciales* consists of the disjointed and fragmentary utterances known as the *Pensées*. These were notes, jotted down at odd times and on any chance scrap of paper, which their author intended to utilize in a projected 'Defence of Christianity', a work which his early death left unachieved.

THOU SHALT NOT KILL

From the fourteenth 'Provincial Letter', dated October 23, 1656.

(Pascal taxes certain of the Jesuit writers with casuistry, with splitting hairs in their examination of the question: When is a crime not a crime? Thus they had held killing to be no murder under certain circumstances, as in a duel on the point of honour. Pascal urges against them the unqualified prohibition of Holy Writ.)

Tout le monde sait, mes Pères,¹ qu'il n'est jamais permis aux particuliers de demander la mort de personne; et que quand un homme nous aurait ruinés, estropiés, brûlé nos maisons, tué notre père, et qu'il se disposerait encore à nous assassiner et à nous perdre d'honneur, on n'écouterait point en justice la demande que nous ferions de sa mort; de sorte qu'il a fallu établir des personnes publiques qui la demandent de la part du Roi, ou plutôt de la part de Dieu. A votre avis, mes Pères, est-ce par grimace et par feinte que les Juges chrétiens ont établi ce règlement? Et ne l'ont-ils pas fait pour proportionner les lois civiles à celles de l'Évangile; de peur que la pratique extérieure de la justice ne

 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ The letter is professedly addressed to the Jesuit Fathers themselves.

fût contraire aux sentiments intérieurs que des Chrétiens doivent avoir? On voit assez combien ce commencement des voies de la Justice vous confond, mais le reste vous accablera.

Supposez donc, mes Pères, que ces personnes publiques demandent la mort de celui qui a commis tous ces crimes, que fera-t-on là-dessus? Lui portera-t-on incontinent le poignard dans le sein? Non, mes Pères: la vie des hommes est trop importante: on v agit avec plus de respect : les lois ne l'ont pas soumise à toutes sortes de personnes, mais seulement aux Juges dont on a examiné la probité et la suffisance. Et crovez-vous qu'un seul suffise pour condamner un homme à mort? Il en faut sept pour le moins, mes Pères. Il faut que de ces sept il n'y en ait aucun qui ait été offensé par le criminel, de peur que la passion n'altère ou ne corrompe son jugement. Et vous savez, mes Pères, qu'afin que leur esprit soit aussi plus pur, on observe encore de donner les heures du matin à ces fonctions. Tant on apporte de soin pour les préparer à une action si grande, où ils tiennent la place de Dieu, dont ils sont les Ministres, pour ne condamner que ceux qu'il condamne lui-même.

Et c'est pourquoi, afin d'y agir comme fidèles dispensateurs de cette puissance divine, d'ôter la vie aux hommes, ils n'ont la liberté de juger que selon les dépositions des témoins, et selon toutes les autres formes qui leur sont prescrites; ensuite desquelles ils ne peuvent en conscience prononcer que selon les lois, ni juger dignes de mort que ceux que les lois y condamnent. Et alors, mes Pères, si l'ordre de Dieu les oblige d'abandonner au supplice les corps de ces misérables, le même ordre de Dieu les oblige de prendre soin de leurs âmes criminelles; et c'est même parce qu'elles sont criminelles qu'ils sont plus obligés à en prendre soin; de sorte

qu'on ne les envoie à la mort qu'après leur avoir donné moyen de pourvoir à leur conscience. Tout cela est bien pur et bien innocent; et néanmoins l'Église abhorre tellement le sang qu'elle juge encore incapables du ministère de ses Autels ceux qui auraient assisté à un arrêt de mort, quoique accompagné de toutes ces circonstances si religieuses: par où il est aisé de concevoir quelle idée l'Église a de l'homicide.

Voilà, mes Pères, de quelle sorte, dans l'ordre de la Justice, on dispose de la vie des hommes : voyons maintenant comment vous en disposez. Dans vos nouvelles lois, il n'y a qu'un juge, et ce juge est celui-là même qui est offensé. Il est tout ensemble le juge, la partie et le hourreau. Il se demande à lui-même la mort de son ennemi, il l'ordonne, il l'exécute sur-le-champ : et sans respect ni du corps, ni de l'âme de son frère, il tue et damne celui pour qui Jésus-Christ est mort : et tout cela pour éviter un soufflet ou une médisance, ou une parole outrageuse, ou d'autres offenses semblables pour lesquelles un juge, qui a l'autorité légitime, serait criminel d'avoir condamné à la mort ceux qui les auraient commises, parce que les lois sont très éloignées de les v condamner. Et enfin, pour comble de ces excès, on ne contracte ni péché, ni irrégularité, en tuant de cette sorte sans autorité et contre les lois, quoiqu'on soit religieux, et même prêtre. Où en sommes-nous, mes Pères? Sont-ce des Religieux et des Prêtres qui parlent de cette sorte ? sont-ce des Chrétiens, sont-ce des Turcs ? sont-ce des hommes ? sont-ce des démons ?

EXTRACTS FROM THE 'PENSÉES'

Man between Two Infinities.

Que l'homme contemple donc la nature entière dans sa haute et pleine majesté; qu'il éloigne sa vue des obiets bas qui l'environnent; qu'il regarde cette éclatante lumière mise comme une lampe éternelle pour éclairer l'univers ; que la terre lui paraisse comme un point au prix du vaste tour que cet astre décrit; et qu'il s'étonne de ce que ce vaste tour lui-même n'est qu'un point très délicat à l'égard de celui que les astres qui roulent dans le firmament embrassent. Mais si notre vue s'arrête là, que l'imagination passe outre : elle se lassera plus tôt de concevoir que la nature de fournir. Tout ce monde visible n'est qu'un trait imperceptible dans l'ample sein de la nature. Nulle idée n'en approche. Nous avons beau enfler nos conceptions au delà des espaces imaginables: nous n'enfantons que des atomes au prix de la réalité des choses. C'est une sphère infinie dont le centre est partout, la circonférence nulle part. Enfin c'est le plus grand caractère sensible de la toute-puissance de Dieu, que notre imagination se perde dans cette pensée.

Que l'homme, étant revenu à soi, considère ce qu'il est au prix de ce qui est; qu'il se regarde comme égaré dans ce canton détourné de la nature; et que de ce petit cachot où il se trouve logé, j'entends l'univers, il apprenne à estimer la terre, les royaumes, les villes et soi-même à son juste prix.

Qu'est-ce qu'un homme dans l'infini? Mais pour lui présenter un autre prodige aussi étonnant, qu'il recherche dans ce qu'il connaît les choses les plus délicates. Qu'un ciron lui offre dans la petitesse de son corps des parties

incomparablement plus petites, des jambes avec des jointures, des veines dans ses jambes, du sang dans ses veines, des humeurs dans ce sang, des gouttes dans ces humeurs, des vapeurs dans ces gouttes : que, divisant encore ces dernières choses, il épuise ses forces en ces conceptions, et que le dernier objet où il peut arriver soit maintenant celui de notre discours : il pensera peut-être que c'est là l'extrême petitesse de la nature. Je veux lui faire voir là-dedans un abîme nouveau. Je lui veux peindre non seulement l'univers visible, mais l'immensité qu'on peut concevoir de la nature, dans l'enceinte de ce raccourci d'atome. Qu'il v voit une infinité d'univers, dont chacun a son firmament, ses planètes, sa terre, en la même proportion que le monde visible 1; dans cette terre, des animaux, et enfin des cirons, dans lesquels il retrouvera ce que les premiers ont donné : et trouvant encore dans les autres la même chose, sans fin et sans repos, qu'il se perde dans ces merveilles, aussi étonnantes dans leur petitesse que les autres par leur étendue : car qui n'admirera 2 que notre corps, qui tantôt n'était pas perceptible dans l'univers, imperceptible lui-même dans le sein du tout, soit à présent un colosse, un monde, ou plutôt un tout, à l'égard du néant où l'on ne peut arriver ?

The Greatness of Man.

La grandeur de l'homme est grande en ce qu'il se connaît misérable. Un arbre ne se connaît pas misérable. C'est donc être misérable que de se connaître misérable, mais c'est être grand que de connaître qu'on est misérable. Toutes ces misères-là mêmes prouvent

2 'will not marvel'.

¹ Curiously illustrated in the recent hypothesis, which sees in the hitherto indivisible atom a replica of the solar system!

sa grandeur. Ce sont misères de grand seigneur, misères d'un roi dépossédé.¹

L'homme n'est qu'un roseau, le plus faible de la nature, mais c'est un roseau pensant. Il ne faut pas que l'univers entier s'arme pour l'écraser. Une vapeur, une goutte d'eau, suffit pour le tuer. Mais quand l'univers l'écraserait, l'homme serait encore plus noble que ce qui le tue, parce qu'il sait qu'il meurt; et l'avantage que l'univers a sur lui, l'univers n'en sait rien.

Toute notre dignité consiste donc en la pensée. C'est de là qu'il faut nous relever, non de l'espace et de la durée, que nous ne saurions remplir. Travaillons donc à bien penser : voilà le principe de la morale.

Life a Dream.

Si nous rêvions toutes les nuits la même chose, elle nous affecterait autant que les objets que nous voyons tous les jours ; et si un artisan était sûr de rêver toutes les nuits, douze heures durant, qu'il est roi, je crois qu'il serait presque aussi heureux qu'un roi qui rêverait toutes les nuits, douze heures durant, qu'il serait artisan.

Si nous rêvions toutes les nuits que nous sommes poursuivis par des ennemis, et agités par ces fantômes pénibles, et qu'on passât tous les jours en diverses occupations, comme quand on fait voyage, on souffirait presque autant que si cela était véritable, et on appréhenderait de dormir, comme on appréhende le réveil quand on craint d'entrer en effet dans de tels malheurs. Et en effet il ferait à peu près les mêmes maux que la réalité. Mais parce que tous les songes sont tous différents, et qu'un même se diversifie, ce

¹ Alluding to the dogma of the Fall of Man.

qu'on y voit affecte bien moins que ce qu'on voit en veillant à cause de la continuité, qui n'est pourtant pas si continue et égale qu'elle ne change aussi, mais moins brusquement, si ce n'est rarement, comme quand on voyage; et alors on dit: 'Il me semble que je rêve'; car la vie est un songe un peu moins inconstant.

War.

Pourquoi me tuez-vous ?—Eh quoi! ne demeurezvous pas de l'autre côté de l'eau, mon ami? Si vous demeuriez de ce côté, je serais un assassin et cela serait injuste de vous tuer de la sorte; mais, puisque vous demeurez de l'autre côté, je suis un brave, et cela est juste.

Self-praise.

Voulez-vous qu'on croie du bien de vous? N'en dites point.

The Democracy of the Animals.

Les bêtes ne s'admirent point. Un cheval n'admire point son compagnon. Ce n'est pas qu'il n'y ait entre eux de l'émulation à la course, mais c'est sans conséquence ; car, étant à l'étable, le plus pesant et plus mal taillé n'en cède pas son avoine à l'autre, comme les hommes veulent qu'on leur fasse. Leur vertu se satisfait d'elle-même.

François, Duc de la Rochefoucauld, Prince de Marsillac (1613–80), was the representative of one of the oldest noble families of France. He embraced the profession of arms at an early age, appeared at Court at sixteen, and was involved in abortive conspiracies and intrigues against Richelieu, which earned for him a week in the Bastille and a three years' exile to his estates, and again in the civil disturbances known as the *Fronde* which marked the minority of Louis XIV. Severely wounded and temporarily blinded at the Battle of the Porte-Saint-Antoine¹, he

¹ Between Turenne, the captain of the Court party and the Mazarinistes, and Condé, the general of the Frondeurs.

withdrew with shattered health into private life. Here he became the idol of a choice and highly intellectual circle, which centred in the salon of Madame de Sablé and included the Cardinal de Retz. Madame de La Favette and Madame de Sévigné. His Mémoires appeared in 1662, and his immortal Maximes in 1665. The writing of 'maxims', pithy reflections on human morals and the nature of man, was a favourite diversion of the company that assembled at Madame de Sablé's, and La Rochefoucauld soon excelled in the art and thus drifted almost by accident into the brilliant fellowship of French writers. His Maximes appeared in five successive editions during his life, which showed an increasing elaboration. sometimes manifested in a further development of the original thought, but more often in the continual striving after greater clearness and concision of expression. The idea which lies at the root of his interpretation of human nature is expressed in the motto which he set at the head of the fourth edition of his Maximes: 'Nos vertus ne sont le plus souvent que des vices déguisés.' In the single maxims he examines in the light of this cynical dictum the various motives of human action, and shows an almost diabolical ingenuity in turning inside out the most disinterested of them, and exposing the seamy side of self-interest which often lies at their core. It is a depressing picture of human nature that La Rochefoucauld offers us. Our better self cries out against it. But we may find comfort in the reflection that he has admittedly constituted himself the advocatus diaboli, and, however we may be constrained to admit the brilliance of his advocacy, we must not forget that it is all ex parte pleading. Before condemning our common humanity, we must in all justice hear the other side.

SELECTED MAXIMS

Self-love.

L'amour-propre est le plus grand de tous les flatteurs.

Others' misfortunes.

Nous avons tous assez de force pour supporter les maux d'autrui.

Never was philosopher that could endure the toothache.

La philosophie triomphe aisément des maux passés et des maux à venir, mais les maux présents triomphent d'elle.

The bright day brings forth the adder.

Il faut de plus grandes vertus pour soutenir la bonne fortune que la mauvaise.

The faults of others.

Si nous n'avions point de défauts, nous ne prendrions pas tant de plaisir à en remarquer dans les autres.

The pride of others.

Si nous n'avions point d'orgueil, nous ne nous plaindrions pas de celui des autres.

Nature's gift to fools.

Il semble que la nature, qui a sagement disposé les organes de notre corps pour nous rendre heureux, nous ait aussi donné l'orgueil pour nous épargner la douleur de connaître nos imperfections.

Compensations in every lot.

Quelque différence qui paraisse entre les fortunes, il y a néanmoins une certaine compensation de biens et de maux qui les rendent égales.

The battle is not to the valiant.

Quelques grands avantages que la nature donne, ce n'est pas elle seule, mais la fortune avec elle, qui fait les héros.

Mistrust of a friend.

Il est plus honteux de se défier de ses amis que d'en être trompé.

What we give most freely.

On ne donne rien si libéralement que ses conseils.

How to get cheated.

Le vrai moyen d'être trompé, c'est de se croire plus fin que les autres.

Great minds and small.

Comme c'est le caractère des grands esprits de faire entendre en peu de paroles beaucoup de choses, les petits esprits, au contraire, ont le don de beaucoup parler et de ne rien dire.

A good word for virtue.

Il faut demeurer d'accord, à l'honneur de la vertu, que les plus grands malheurs des hommes sont ceux où ils tombent par les crimes.

The faults that least trouble us.

Nous oublions aisément nos fautes lorsqu'elles ne sont sues que de nous.

How the world judges.

La plupart des gens ne jugent les hommes que par la vogue qu'ils ont, ou par leur fortune.

Hypocrisy.

L'hypocrisie est un hommage que le vice rend à la vertu.

Impatience under an obligation.

Le trop grand empressement qu'on a de s'acquitter d'une obligation est une espèce d'ingratitude.

The madness of being the only sane man.

C'est une grande folie de vouloir être sage tout seul

The small avail of experience.

Nous arrivons tout nouveaux aux divers âges de la vie, et nous y manquons souvent d'expérience, malgré le nombre des années.

VIRTUES UNMASKED

I. Love of justice.

L'amour de la justice n'est, en la plupart des hommes, que la crainte de souffrir l'injustice.

II. Repentance.

Notre repentir n'est pas tant un regret du mal que nous avons fait, qu'une crainte de celui qui nous en peut arriver.

III. Pity.

La pitié est souvent un sentiment de nos propres maux dans les maux d'autrui; c'est une habile prévoyance des malheurs où nous pouvons tomber; nous donnons du secours aux autres, pour les engager à nous en donner en de semblables occasions, et ces services que nous leur rendons sont, à proprement parler, des biens que nous nous faisons à nous-mêmes par avance.

IV. Gratitude, 'a lively sense of favours to come'.

La reconnaissance de la plupart des hommes n'est qu'une secrète envie de recevoir de plus grands bienfaits.

V. Generosity in praise.

C'est, en quelque sorte, se donner part aux belles actions que de les louer de bon cœur.

THE ART OF CONVERSATION

Ce qui fait que si peu de personnes sont agréables dans la conversation, c'est que chacun songe plus à ce qu'il veut dire qu'à ce que les autres disent. Il faut écouter ceux qui parlent, si on en veut être écouté; il faut leur laisser la liberté de se faire entendre, et même de dire des choses inutiles. Au lieu de les contredire ou de les interrompre, comme on fait souvent, on doit, au contraire, entrer dans leur esprit et dans leur goût, montrer qu'on les entend, leur parler de ce qui les touche, louer ce qu'ils disent autant qu'il mérite d'être loué, et faire voir que c'est plutôt par choix qu'on le loue que par complaisance. Il faut éviter de contester sur des choses indifférentes, faire rarement des questions, qui sont presque toujours inutiles, ne laisser jamais croire qu'on prétend avoir plus de raison que les autres, et céder aisément l'avantage de décider.

On doit dire des choses naturelles, faciles et plus ou moins sérieuses, selon l'humeur et l'inclination des personnes que l'on entretient, ne les presser pas d'approuver ce qu'on dit, même d'y répondre. Quand on a satisfait de cette sorte aux devoirs de la politesse, on peut dire ses sentiments, sans prévention et sans opiniâtreté, en faisant paraître qu'on cherche à les appuyer de l'avis de ceux qui écoutent.

Il faut éviter de parler longtemps de soi-même et de se donner souvent pour exemple... On ne doit jamais parler avec des airs d'autorité, ni se servir de paroles et de termes plus grands que les choses. On peut conserver ses opinions, si elles sont raisonnables; mais en les conservant, il ne faut jamais blesser les sentiments des autres, ni paraître choqué de ce qu'ils ont dit. Il est dangereux de vouloir être toujours le maître de la conversation, et de parler trop souvent d'une même chose; on doit entrer indifféremment sur tous les sujets agréables qui se présentent, et ne faire jamais voir qu'on veut entraîner la conversation sur ce qu'on a envie de dire.

Il est nécessaire d'observer que toute sorte de conversation, quelque honnête et quelque spirituelle qu'elle soit, n'est pas également propre à toute sorte d'honnêtes gens : il faut choisir ce qui convient à chacun, et choisir même le temps de le dire; mais s'il y a beaucoup d'art à savoir parler à propos, il n'y en a pas moins à savoir se taire. Il y a un silence éloquent: il sert quelquefois à approuver et à condamner; il y a un silence moqueur; il y a un silence respectueux; il y a enfin des airs, des tons et des manières qui font souvent ce qu'il y a d'agréable ou de désagréable, de délicat ou de choquant dans la conversation; le secret de s'en bien servir est donné à peu de personnes; ceux même qui en font des règles s'y méprennent quelquefois; la plus sûre, à mon avis, c'est de n'en point avoir qu'on ne puisse changer, de laisser plutôt voir de négligences dans ce qu'on dit que de l'affectation, d'écouter, de ne parler guère, et de ne se forcer jamais à parler.

JEAN DE LA BRUYÈRE (1645-96) was born at Paris of a middleclass family, studied law, and was called to the bar. He purchased in 1673 an office of treasurer of finance in the provinces which permitted of his residence in Paris, where he lived the quiet life of a student of books and men. In 1684 upon the recommendation of Bossuet he was appointed tutor to the grandson of the Prince de Condé, the Duc de Bourbon, and when that task was ended he remained attached to the household of the father of his pupil. In his corner at Condé House he had, as Sainte-Beuve says, 'une première loge au spectacle du siècle'. a stage-box whence to observe the comedy of the age, and the one work by which he lives, Les Caractères, ou les mœurs de ce siècle (published as an appendix to a translation of the Characters of Theophrastus), was in effect his criticism of the play. It is a sorry enough picture that he paints of the ambition, the vanity, the hypocrisy, the folly of men, of the shallowness and frivolity of women, of the worship of wealth in society, and of the vanity of human life in general. He was by deliberate judgement a partisan of the Classical School of Boileau, as clearly appeared in his discourse upon his reception at the Academy, but by natural instinct he belonged rather to the new century on the threshold of which he stood. His kinship with the coming age appears in the individuality of his character studies and the concreteness and

objectivity of the touches whereby he paints his pictures, and no less in the severity with which he handles the aristocracy (a reflection, doubtless, of the personal humiliation which he must often have suffered in his quasi-menial position), and in his touching sympathy with the sufferings of the down-trodden poor. Here he strikes a note which, destined to swell through the eighteenth century into a mighty volume of sound, had before him scarcely been heard in the concert of French literature.1 The novelty of his style was scarcely less remarkable. He cuts up the stately period which the seventeenth century had adopted from its Latin models into a rapid sequence of short sentences in the manner which was to become a feature of French prose. And the means he adopts to diversify and enliven his style are so many and so varied that, small in bulk as is his literary baggage, it offers to the student an epitome of the resources of the French language. La Bruvère's advocacy of the cause of the Ancients in the famous literary quarrel, and still more the indisputable personal nature, in spite of his disclaimers, of many of his portraits, made him such bitter enemies that his sudden death in 1696, in all likelihood from apoplexy, was by some attributed to poison.

THE ABSENT-MINDED MAN

(In the following sketch La Bruyère has brought together examples of absence of mind drawn from various sources. The hero of the greater number of these anecdotes is generally supposed to have been a certain Comte de Brancas. The extravagant nature of some at least of the inadvertences related of de Brancas lends support to the view of Bussy-Rabutin that absent-mindedness was, to some extent, merely a pose on his part, affected to bring himself into prominence, since his buffooneries amused the King.)

Ménalque descend son escalier, ouvre sa porte pour sortir, il la referme : il s'aperçoit qu'il est en bonnet de nuit ; et venant à mieux s'examiner, il se trouve rasé à moitié, il voit que son épée est mise du côté droit, que ses

¹ But compare the peasant in *Aucassin et Nicolette*, p. 49, with La Bruyère's famous description of the French peasant under the Ancien Régime, quoted on p. 303.

bas sont rabattus sur ses talons, et que sa chemise est par-dessus ses chausses. S'il marche dans les places, il se sent tout d'un coup rudement frapper à l'estomac ou au visage: il ne soupconne point ce que ce peut être. jusqu'à ce qu'ouvrant les veux et se réveillant il se trouve ou devant un limon de charrette, ou derrière un long ais de menuiserie que porte un ouvrier sur ses épaules. On l'a vu une fois heurter du front contre celui d'un aveugle, s'embarrasser dans ses jambes, et tomber avec lui chacun de son côté à la renverse . . . Il cherche, il brouille, il crie, il s'échauffe, il appelle ses valets, l'un après l'autre : on lui perd tout, on lui égare tout: il demande ses gants, qu'il a dans ses mains, semblable à cette femme qui prenait le temps de demander son masque lorsqu'elle l'avait sur son visage. Il entre à l'appartement, 1 et passe sous un lustre où sa perruque s'accroche et demeure suspendue: tous les courtisans regardent et rient : Ménalque regarde aussi et rit plus haut que les autres, il cherche des veux dans toute l'assemblée où est celui qui montre ses oreilles, et à qui il manque une perruque. S'il va par la ville, après avoir fait quelque chemin, il se croit égaré, il s'émeut, et il demande où il est à des passants, qui lui disent précisément le nom de sa rue : il entre ensuite dans sa maison, d'où il sort précipitamment, croyant qu'il s'est trompé. Il descend du Palais ² et, trouvant au bas du grand degré un carrosse qu'il prend pour le sien, il se met dedans : le cocher touche 3 et croit remener son maître dans sa maison; Ménalque se jette hors de la portière, traverse la cour, monte l'escalier, parcourt l'antichambre, la chambre, le cabinet ; tout lui est familier, rien ne lui est

¹ The room in the Castle of Versailles where the Court assembled in the evening.

² The Palais de Justice, then a fashionable resort.

³ 'whips up', 'drives on'.

nouveau; il s'assied, il se repose, il est chez soi. Le maître arrive: celui-ci 1 se lève pour le recevoir: il le traite fort civilement, le prie de s'asseoir, et croit faire les honneurs de sa chambre : il parle, il rêve, il reprend la parole: le maître de la maison s'ennuie, et demeure étonné; Ménalque ne l'est pas moins, et ne dit pas ce qu'il en pense : il a affaire à un fâcheux, à un homme oisif, qui se retirera à la fin, il l'espère, et il prend patience: la nuit arrive qu'il est à peine détrompé. Une autre fois il rend visite à une femme, et se persuadant bientôt que c'est lui qui la recoit, il s'établit dans son fauteuil et ne songe nullement à l'abandonner: il trouve ensuite que cette dame fait ses visites longues, il attend à tous moments qu'elle se lève et le laisse en liberté; mais comme cela tire en longueur, qu'il a faim, et que la nuit est déjà avancée, il la prie à souper : elle rit, et si haut. qu'elle le réveille. Lui-même se marie le matin, l'oublie le soir, et découche la nuit de ses noces; et quelques années après il perd sa femme, elle meurt entre ses bras, il assiste à ses obsèques, et le lendemain, quand on lui vient dire qu'on a servi, il demande si sa femme est prête et si elle est avertie. C'est lui encore qui entre dans une église et, prenant l'aveugle qui est collé à la porte pour un pilier, et sa tasse pour le bénitier, y plonge la main, la porte à son front, lorsqu'il entend tout d'un coup le pilier qui parle, et qui lui offre des oraisons.2 Il s'avance dans la nef, il croit voir un prie-Dieu, il se jette lourdement dessus: la machine plie, s'enfonce, et fait des efforts pour crier; Ménalque est surpris de se voir à genoux sur les jambes d'un fort petit homme, appuvé sur son dos, les deux bras passés sur ses épaules, et ses

¹ sc. Ménalque.

² Menalcas dips his fingers into the cup which the beggar holds out for alms, in order to cross himself with holy water; the beggar, thinking he has received alms, begins to pray for him.

deux mains jointes et étendues qui lui prennent le nez et lui ferment la bouche; il se retire confus, et va s'agenouiller ailleurs. Il tire un livre pour faire sa prière, et c'est sa pantoufle qu'il a prise pour ses Heures, et qu'il a mise dans sa poche avant que de sortir. Il n'est pas hors de l'église qu'un homme de livrée court après lui, le joint, lui demande en riant s'il n'a point la pantoufle de Monseigneur : Ménalque lui montre la sienne, et lui dit: 'Voilà toutes les pantoufles que j'ai sur moi ': il se fouille néanmoins, et tire celle de l'évêque de — qu'il vient de quitter qu'il a trouvé malade auprès de son feu, et dont, avant de prendre congé de lui, il a ramassé la pantoufle, comme l'un de ses gants qui était à terre : ainsi Ménalque s'en retourne chez soi avec une pantoufle de moins . . . Il joue au trictrac, il demande à boire, on lui en apporte : c'est à lui à jouer, il tient le cornet d'une main et un verre de l'autre, et comme il a une grande soif, il avale les dés et presque le cornet, jette le verre d'eau dans le trictrac, et inonde celui contre qui il joue. Et dans une chambre où il est familier il crache 1 sur le lit et jette son chapeau à terre, en croyant faire tout le contraire. Il se promène sur l'eau, et il demande quelle heure il est; on hui présente une montre; à peine l'a-t-il recue, que ne songeant plus ni à l'heure ni à la montre, il la jette dans la rivière, comme une chose qui l'embarrasse. Lui-même écrit une longue lettre, met de la poudre 2 dessus à plusieurs reprises, et jette tou-

it is by no means extinct in France. The sand should of course have

been returned to the pounce-box.

¹ The passage is interesting for the light it throws on a point in which the manners of this highly refined society differed strangely from ours. If Menalcas had thrown his hat on the bed and spit on the floor, no susceptibilities would have been shocked. Johnson, in Boswell's Life, says: 'The French are an indelicate people. They will spit upon any place.'

The custom of drying fresh writing by sprinkling sand upon

jours la poudre dans l'encrier. Ce n'est pas tout : il écrit une seconde lettre et, après les avoir cachetées toutes deux, il se trompe à l'adresse : un duc et pair recoit l'une de ces deux lettres, et en l'ouvrant y lit ces mots : Maître Olivier, ne manquez, sitôt la présente recue. de m'envoyer ma provision de foin . . . Son fermier recoit l'autre, il l'ouvre, et se la fait lire; on y trouve: Monseigneur, j'ai recu avec une soumission aveugle les ordres qu'il a plu à Votre Grandeur . . . Lui-même encore écrit une lettre pendant la nuit, et après l'avoir cachetée il éteint sa bougie : il ne laisse pas d'être surpris de ne voir goutte, et il sait à peine comment cela est arrivé . . . Il se trouve par hasard avec une jeune veuve : il lui parle de son défunt mari, lui demande comment il est mort: cette femme, à qui ce discours renouvelle ses douleurs. pleure, sanglote, et ne laisse pas de reprendre tous les détails de la maladie de son époux, qu'elle conduit depuis la veille de sa fièvre, qu'il se portait bien, jusqu'à l'agonie: Madame, lui demande Ménalque, qui l'avait apparemment écoutée avec attention, n'aviez-vous que celui-là ? 1 ... Il a pris la résolution de marier son fils à la fille d'un homme d'affaires, et il ne laisse pas de dire de temps en temps, en parlant de sa maison et de ses ancêtres, que les Ménalques ne se sont jamais mésalliés²... Il revient une fois de la campagne : ses laquais en livrées entreprennent de le voler et y réussissent ; ils descendent de son carrosse, lui portent un bout de flambeau sous la gorge, lui demandent la bourse, et il la rend. Arrivé chez soi, il raconte son aventure à ses amis, qui ne manquent pas de l'interroger sur les circonstances, et il leur dit : Demandez à mes gens,3 ils y étaient.

Was he all you had? Menalcas' wits are wool-gathering. He thinks that it is a son that the bereaved lady has lost!

"" 'married beneath them'." "Servants,' as often."

SELECTED MAXIMS

Criticism.

Il n'y a pas d'ouvrage si accompli qui ne fondît tout entier au milieu de la critique, si son auteur voulait en croire tous les censeurs qui ôtent chacun l'endroit qui leur plaît le moins.

The Good Man.

Celui-là est bon qui fait du bien aux autres; s'il souffre pour le bien qu'il fait, il est très-bon; s'il souffre de ceux à qui il a fait ce bien, il a une si grande bonté qu'elle ne peut être augmentée que dans le cas où ses souffrances viendraient à croître; et s'il en meurt, sa vertu ne saurait aller plus loin: elle est héroïque, elle est parfaite.

How God shows the little store he sets by riches.

Rien ne fait mieux comprendre le peu de chose que Dieu croit donner aux hommes, en leur abandonnant les richesses, l'argent, les grands établissements et les autres biens, que la dispensation qu'il en fait, et le genre d'hommes qui en sont le mieux pourvus.

The Financier.

Fuyez, retirez-vous: vous n'êtes pas assez loin. Je suis, dites-vous, sous l'autre tropique. Passez sous le pôle et dans l'autre hémisphère, montez aux étoiles, si vous le pouvez. — M'y voilà. — Fort bien, vous êtes en sûreté. Je découvre sur la terre un homme avide, insatiable, inexorable, qui veut, aux dépens de tout ce qui se trouvera sur son chemin et à sa rencontre, et quoi qu'il en puisse coûter aux autres, pourvoir à lui seul, grossir sa fortune, et regorger de bien.

The Pleasures of which the Rich deprive themselves.

Les grands se piquent d'ouvrir une allée dans une forêt, de soutenir des terres par de longues murailles, de dorer des plafonds, de faire venir dix pouces d'eau, de meubler une orangerie: mais de rendre un cœur content, de combler une âme de joie, de prévenir d'extrêmes besoins ou d'y remédier, leur curiosité ne s'étend point jusque-là.

The Peasant under the Ancien Régime.

L'on voit certains animaux farouches, des mâles et des femelles, répandus par la campagne, noirs, livides, et tout brûlés du soleil, attachés à la terre qu'ils fouillent et qu'ils remuent avec une opiniâtreté invincible; ils ont comme une voix articulée, et quand ils se lèvent sur leurs pieds ils montrent une face humaine, et en effet ils sont des hommes. Ils se retirent la nuit dans des tanières, où ils vivent de pain noir, d'eau et de racines; ils épargnent aux autres hommes la peine de semer, de labourer et de recueillir pour vivre, et méritent ainsi de ne pas manquer de ce pain qu'ils ont semé.

The only real misfortune.

Il n'y a pour l'homme qu'un vrai malheur, qui est de se trouver en faute et d'avoir quelque chose à se reprocher.

CHAPTER IV

MEMOIRS AND LETTERS

Memoirs and Letters in the Seventeenth Century.

THERE needs no excuse for grouping together these two forms, in both of which the writer communicates his personal observations and reflections. The memoir is but a long letter addressed to posterity, the letter is a brief memoir, addressed to a contemporary, or rather, in the case of seventeenthcentury letters, to a circle of contemporaries. The function of both is in modern times largely fulfilled by the monthly and daily press, the enfranchisement of which from the strict censorship which obtained in the seventeenth century has made it possible. to a large extent, to give to the world during one's lifetime what it was then safe to speak only from the sure asylum of the tomb, whilst its great development is one at least of the causes which have led to the decline of letter-writing as an art. French literature in the seventeenth century abounds both in memoirs and letters, which are not only invaluable historical documents, but are frequently notable monuments of literature. In them the literature of the classical period naturally departs most widely from its characteristic impersonal attitude, and the style of the writers as naturally escapes from the restraint of the formal literary canons. In none does the personality of the writer shine more vividly through the printed page than in the memoirs of Saint-Simon and the letters of Madame de Sévigné, who have been chosen to represent in this work the one and the other class respectively.

From 1655 to 1694 scarcely a day passed without

its tribute of correspondence from Madame de The Sévigné's pen, and from 1671 in particular, the date Letters of Madame of her first separation from her idolized daughter, the de Sévigné. stream of letters written to her was interrupted only during the intervals when they were together. In them are reflected as in a mirror all the most important events of the time, mingled with her personal reflections, reminiscences of travel, reading and literary criticism and philosophical reflections, gossipy anecdotes of the society life of the day, and commonplaces of everyday life. Her style is praised as the perfection of the epistolary style; it is, in brief, the crystallized conversation of a witty, lively, amiable, well-bred and well-read woman, shunning neither the provincialisms, nor the colloquialisms, nor the archaisms which were tabooed in the conventional literary style of the day; rich in colour and fertile in images; reminiscent of Montaigne, suggesting comparison with La Fontaine. and prophetic of Voltaire.

The memoirs of Saint-Simon cover the period The between 1691 and 1722, practically, that is, the Memoirs generation following Madame de Sévigné, and are of Saintan equally valuable reflection of the manners and events of that time, if, that is, allowance be made for their distortion by the medium through which they have reached us. As is said elsewhere, Saint-Simon sees men and things through a cloud of malignity generated by his own frustrated ambitions. Yet he has marvellously clear vision for the weaknesses of those he hates and despises, and pours forth a flood of eloquence at white-heat which defies all the restraints of syntax. His narrative has a vitality by the side of which the ordinary historian seems tame and lifeless, and his portraits, of which he often paints several of the same person at different periods, stand out with almost unparalleled relief. The rancour of the unsuccessful courtier is not

incompatible with a real indignation at the vice to which it opens his eyes, and, as Sainte-Beuve says, 'Ce n'est pas une très bonne marque pour un homme d'être très maltraité et défiguré par Saint-Simon.'

MARIE DE RABUTIN-CHANTAL, MARQUISE DE SÉVIGNÉ (1626-96), was the only daughter of Celse-Bénigne de Rabutin. Baron de Chantal, and of Marie de Coulanges. Her father was killed in battle with the English in the Île de Ré in the year after her birth and her mother died in her sixth year. The orphaned girl was reared under the care of her uncle, the abbé de Coulanges, in such a way as to win for him her abiding affection. She had as tutors Ménage and Chapelain, men of no little repute in their own day as scholars and men of letters, but whose literary reputation did not survive the attacks of Boileau and Molière. She learned Latin, Italian, and Spanish so well as to be able to read these languages with as great ease as her native tongue, and remained all her life passionately devoted to reading, both trivial and of the most serious character. A short experience of Court life contributed to enhance her innate grace and elegance. At the age of eighteen she married the Marquis Henri de Sévigné. The marriage was unhappy. Her husband, a man of unworthy life. was killed in a duel seven years after the marriage, leaving her with a daughter and a son, and with shattered fortune. The widowed marquise devoted herself to the education of her children and to the restoration of their impaired circumstances. In 1654 she reappeared at Court and in society, and was frequently seen at the Hôtel de Rambouillet. She presented her daughter at Court at the age of sixteen years, and greatly relished being the mother of the 'prettiest girl in France'. Her passionate love of this daughter it was that made of Madame de Sévigné such an indefatigable letter-writer, the greater number of letters being written to bridge the distance that separated them after her daughter's marriage with the Comte de Grignan, whose governorship of Provence held the new household remote from She herself thenceforward oscillated between her house in Paris and her estate in Brittany, with occasional visits to Provence. She died at the age of seventy, falling a victim to small-pox after

¹ Ménage is the Vadius of the Femmes savantes.

having undermined her health by her devoted nursing of her

daughter in a dangerous illness.

The letters of Madame de Sévigné were passed from hand to hand during her life, and continued to circulate in manuscript long after her death. Some were printed as early as 1696; a first collection was published in 1726, containing only the letters addressed to her daughter; and thenceforward collections more and more complete continued to appear.

INCIDENTS OF TRAVEL IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

I. Journey interrupted by rain.

(Madame de Sévigné is travelling from Paris to visit her daughter at her home at Grignan. The letter is written at Lambesc, December 20, 1672.)

Quand on compte sans la Providence, ma chère fille, on court risque souvent de se mécompter. J'étais toute habillée à huit heures, j'avais pris mon café, entendu la messe, tous les adieux faits, le bardot 1 chargé : les sonnettes des mulets me faisaient souvenir qu'il fallait monter en litière : ma chambre était pleine de monde. qui me priait de ne point partir, parce que depuis plusieurs iours il pleut beaucoup, et depuis hier continuellement, et même dans le moment. Je résistais hardiment à tous ces discours, faisant honneur à la résolution que j'avais prise et à tout ce que je vous mandai hier par la poste, en assurant que j'arriverais jeudi, lorsque tout d'un coup M. de Grignan², en robe de chambre d'omelette 3, m'a parlé si sérieusement de la témérité de mon entreprise, que mon muletier ne suivrait pas ma litière, que mes mulets tomberaient dans les fossés, que mes gens seraient mouillés et hors

* Omelette-coloured.

¹ Little mule.

² The husband of Madame de Sévigné's daughter.

d'état de me secourir, qu'en un moment j'ai changé d'avis, et j'ai cédé entièrement à ses sages remontrances. Ainsi coffres qu'on rapporte, mulets qu'on dételle, filles et laquais qui se sèchent pour avoir seulement traversé la cour, et messager que l'on vous envoie, connaissant vos bontés et vos inquiétudes, et voulant aussi apaiser les miennes, parce que je suis en peine de votre santé, et que cet homme ou reviendra nous en apporter des nouvelles, ou me trouvera par les chemins.

II. Stranded on the Loire. Night in a Cottage.

(From Madame de Sévigné to her daughter, written September 17, 1675, on a boat on the Loire. She is travelling from Orléans to Nantes by water.)

Il y a trente lieues de Saumur à Nantes; nous avons résolu de les faire en deux jours, et d'arriver aujourd'hui à Nantes : dans ce dessein, nous allâmes hier deux heures de nuit : nous nous engravâmes, et nous demeurâmes à deux cents pas de notre hôtellerie sans pouvoir aborder. Nous revînmes au bruit d'un chien, et nous arrivâmes à minuit dans un tugurio 1, plus pauvre, plus misérable qu'on ne peut vous le représenter : il n'y avait rien du tout que deux ou trois vieilles femmes qui filaient, et de la paille fraîche, sur quoi nous avons tous couché sans nous déshabiller. J'aurais bien ri, sans l'abbé, que je meurs de honte d'exposer ainsi à la fatigue d'un vovage. Nous nous sommes rembarqués avec la pointe du jour, et nous étions si parfaitement bien établis dans notre gravier, que nous avons été près d'une heure avant que de reprendre le fil de notre discours. Nous voulons, contre vent et marée, arriver à Nantes: nous ramons tous.

¹ Italian word for 'hut'.

III. Travelling in Brittany. Wet Weather.

(Dated from *Les Rochers*, Madame de Sévigné's estate in Brittany, May 31, 1680. To her daughter.)

Nous partîmes (from Rennes) à dix heures, et tout le monde me disant que j'avais trop de temps, que les chemins étaient comme dans cette chambre, car c'est toujours la comparaison ; ils étaient si bien comme dans cette chambre, que nous n'arrivâmes ici qu'après douze heures du soir, toujours dans l'eau, et de Vitré ici, où j'ai été mille fois, nous ne les reconnaissions pas : tous les pavés sont devenus impraticables, les bourbiers sont enfoncés, les hauts et bas plus hauts et bas qu'ils n'étaient; enfin, voyant que nous ne voyions plus rien. et qu'il fallait tâter le chemin, nous envoyâmes demander du secours à Pilois : il vient avec une douzaine de gars; les uns nous tenaient, les autres nous éclairaient avec plusieurs bouchons de paille, et tous parlaient si extrêmement breton, que nous pâmions de rire. Enfin, avec cette illumination, nous arrivâmes ici, nos chevaux rebutés, nos gens tout trempés, mon carrosse rompu, et nous assez fatigués : nous mangeames peu : nous avons beaucoup dormi; et ce matin nous nous sommes trouvés aux Rochers, mais encore tout gauches et mal rangés.

CARDINAL MAZARIN AND THE COMET

(Dated January 2, 1681. To Count de Bussy Rabutin.)

Nous avons ici une comète qui est bien étendue aussi; c'est la plus belle queue qu'il est possible de voir. Tous les grands personnages sont alarmés et croient fermement que le ciel, bien occupé de leur perte, en donne des avertissements par cette comète. On dit que le cardinal Mazarin étant désespéré des médecins, ses cour-

tisans crurent qu'il fallait honorer son agonie d'un prodige, et lui dirent qu'il paraissait une grande comète qui leur faisait peur. Il eut la force de se moquer d'eux, et il leur dit plaisamment que la comète lui faisait trop d'honneur. En vérité, on devrait en dire autant que lui; et l'orgueil humain se fait trop d'honneur de croire qu'il y ait de grandes affaires dans les astres quand on doit mourir.

NEW USE FOR A TELESCOPE

(From Madame de Sévigné to her daughter, October 6, 1675.)

A propos, vous ai-je parlé d'une lunette admirable qui faisait notre amusement dans le bateau? C'est un chef-d'œuvre : elle est encore plus admirable que celle que l'abbé vous a laissée à Grignan. Cette lunette rapproche fort bien les objets de trois lieues; que ne les approche-t-elle de deux cents! 1 Vous pouvez penser l'usage que nous en faisions sur ces bords de Loire; mais voyez celui que j'en fais ici : c'est que par l'autre bout elle éloigne aussi, et je la tourne sur Mlle du Plessis, et je la trouve tout d'un coup à deux lieues de moi. Je fis l'autre jour cette sottise sur elle et sur mes voisins ; cela fut fort plaisant, mais personne ne m'entendit: s'il y avait eu quelqu'un que j'eusse pu regarder seulement, cette folie m'aurait bien réjouie. Quand on se trouve bien oppressée de méchante compagnie, faire venir promptement sa lunette et la tourner du bon côté: demandez à Montgobert si elle n'aurait pas ri : voilà un beau sujet pour dire des sottises. Si vous avez Corbinelli, je vous recommande la lunette. Adieu, ma chère enfant : Dieu merci, comme vous dites, nous ne sommes pas des montagnes, et j'espère vous embrasser autrement que de deux cents lieues.

¹ See end of extract.

SIDELIGHTS ON THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION OF 1688

I. King James II deserted by his daughter Anne and her husband, Prince George of Denmark.

(From a letter to her daughter, dated September 13, 1688.)

Le roi d'Angleterre est revenu à Londres, abandonné de ses plus fidèles en apparence; il avait un furieux saignement de nez: s'il avait été où il avait dessein d'aller,¹ on l'eût mis entre les mains du prince d'Orange. Il a été pressé de promettre un parlement libre pour le mois qui vient: on dit que c'est sa perte assurée. Son gendre, le prince de Danemark, et son autre fille, qui est encore une Tullie², et que j'appelle la demoiselle de Danemarck³, sont allés trouver ce fléau de prince d'Orange. On dit que le petit prince ⁴ n'est point à Portsmouth, où l'on le croyait assiégé: sa fuite fera un roman quelque jour. On ne doute pas que le roi son père ne s'enfuie aussi. Voilà donc apparemment le prince d'Orange maître et protecteur, et bientôt pis ⁵, à moins d'un miraele.

II. Flight of the Queen with the Prince of Wales. (Dated December 24, 1688.)

Une heure après il (le roi) se relève, et dit à un valet de chambre qu'il fît entrer un homme qu'il trouverait à la porte de l'antichambre ; c'était M. de Lauzun. Il lui

¹ i.e. at a review of his troops. A conspiracy existed to carry him off on this occasion.

² The writer had already compared James' daughter Mary to Tullia, wife of Tarquin the Proud, who according to Livy caused her chariot to drive over the body of her murdered father.

her chariot to drive over the body of her murdered father.

³ Character in the old romance of *Amadis*, the confidant and envoy of the 'beautiful Oriana'.

⁴ James Francis Edward, born June 20 of this year, afterwards known as the 'Old Pretender'.

⁵ i.e. king.

dit: 'Monsieur, je vous confie la reine et mon fils: il faut tout hasarder et tâcher de les conduire en France.' M. de Lauzun le remercia, comme vous pouvez penser: mais il voulut mener avec lui un gentilhomme d'Avignon. nommé Saint-Victor, que l'on connaît, qui a beaucoup de courage et de mérite. Il vint, il prit le petit prince dans son manteau, qu'on disait être à Portsmouth, qui était caché dans le palais. M. Lauzun donna la main à la reine : vous pouvez jeter un regard sur l'adieu qu'elle fit au roi : et suivis de ces deux femmes 1 que je vous ai nommées, ils allèrent dans la rue prendre un carrosse de louage. Ils se mirent ensuite dans un petit bateau le long de la rivière, où ils eurent un si gros temps, qu'ils ne savaient où se mettre. Enfin, à l'embouchure de la Tamise, ils se mirent dans un vacht, M. de Lauzun auprès du patron, en cas que ce fût un traître, pour le jeter dans la mer. Mais il ne crovait mener que des gens du commun, comme il en passe souvent; il ne songea qu'à passer tout simplement au milieu de cinquante bâtiments hollandais, qui ne regardaient pas seulement cette petite barque; et ainsi protégée du ciel, et à couvert de sa mauvaise mine, elle aborda heureusement à Calais, où M. de Charost la recut avec tout le respect que vous pouvez penser. Le courrier arriva hier à midi au Roi, qui conta toutes ces particularités; et en même temps on donna ordre aux carrosses du Roi d'aller au devant de cette reine, pour l'amener à Vincennes, que l'on fait meubler. On dit que Sa Majesté ira au-devant. Voilà le premier tome du roman, dont vous aurez incessamment la suite.

¹ A nurse and a female attendant.

III. James II a prisoner at Whitehall.

(Dated January 3, 1689, from Paris. Written to her daughter.)

Le roi d'Angleterre a été pris, on dit, en faisant le chasseur et voulant se sauver. Il est dans Vittal¹: je ne sais point écrire ce mot. Il a son capitaine des gardes, des milords à son lever, beaucoup d'honneurs; mais tout cela est fort bien gardé. Le prince d'Orange à Saint-Jem², qui est de l'autre côté du jardin. On tiendra le parlement: Dieu conduise cette barque! La reine d'Angleterre sera ici mercredi; elle vient à Saint-Germain, pour être plus près du Roi et de ses bontés.

IV. Arrival of James II at the French Court.

(Dated Paris, le jour des Rois (6 janvier) de 1689. Written to Count de Bussy Rabutin.)

La cour est toute pleine de cordons bleus ³: on ne fait point de visites qu'on n'en trouve quatre ou cinq à chacune. Cet ornement ne saurait venir plus à propos pour faire honneur au roi et à la reine d'Angleterre, qui arrivent aujourd'hui à Saint-Germain. Ce n'est point à Vincennes, comme on disait. Ce sera justement aujourd'hui la véritable fête des rois, ⁴ bien agréable pour celui ⁵ qui protège et qui sert de refuge, et bien triste pour celui ⁶ qui a besoin d'un asile. Voilà de grands objets et de grands sujets de méditation et de conversation. Les politiques ont beaucoup à dire. On ne doute pas que le prince d'Orange n'ait bien voulu laisser échapper le roi, pour se trouver sans crime maître de

¹ Whitehall. ² St. James.

³ Knights of the Holy Ghost.
⁴ The writer plays upon the name given in France to the day on which her letter was written, January 6, le Jour des Rois, English 'Twelfth Night'.

⁵ Louis. ⁶ James.

l'Angleterre; et le roi, de son côté, a eu raison de quitter la partie plutôt que de hasarder sa vie avec un parlement qui a fait mourir le feu roi son père, quoiqu'il fût de leur religion. Voilà de si grands évènements, qu'il n'est pas aisé d'en comprendre le dénouement, surtout quand on jette les yeux sur l'état et sur les dispositions de toute l'Europe. Cette même Providence qui règle tout, démêlera tout; nous sommes ici les spectateurs très-aveugles et très-ignorants.

V. How the Prince of Orange connived at the escape of James.

(Dated Paris, January 10, 1689. To her daughter.)

Pour la fuite du roi, il paraît que le prince d'Orange l'a bien voulue. Il l'envoya à Exester ¹, où il voulait aller : il était fort bien gardé par le devant de sa maison, et toutes les portes de derrière ouvertes. Le prince n'a point voulu faire périr son beau-père ; il est dans Londres à la place du roi, sans en prendre le nom, ne voulant que rétablir une religion qu'il croit bonne, et maintenir les lois du pays, sans qu'il en coûte une goutte de sang : voilà l'envers tout juste ² de ce que nous pensions de lui ; ce sont des points de vue fort différents.

LOUIS DE ROUVRAY, DUC DE SAINT-SIMON (1675–1755), was a malcontent, the son of a malcontent. His father, Claude de Saint-Simon, the page and favourite of Louis XIII, after having risen by the King's favour to signal wealth and honour, and been created 'duc et pair', was precipitated from his pinnacle by the jealousy of Richelieu. His hopes of re-establishing his fortunes after the death of Richelieu were frustrated, and he retired into private life, a soured and discontented man. All the dreams he had dreamed of the aggrandisement of his family now centred in his son Louis, the child of his old age (he was sixty-eight years old when that son was born). The boy was nurtured in the hatred

¹ Really to Rochester.

^{2 &#}x27;the very opposite'.

of the Cardinal Ministers, Richelieu and Mazarin, and of the new bourgeois régime, was puffed up with the pride of nobility, and inspired with the ambition to restore and yet further advance the family fortunes. To this end he devoted himself with untiring ardour, but with the mistaken idea that it was to be accomplished rather by Court intrigue than by the value of the services rendered. He served a while in the army, but a supposed slight, inflaming his morbid vanity, led to his resignation, and thenceforward he devoted himself to pushing his fortunes at Court. Twice it seemed as if his ingenious moves in the intricate game of Court intrigue had placed success within his hands, and twice he was checkmated, once by the death of the Duc de Bourgogne, the heir-apparent, with whom he had gained great influence, and again when, having through his long friendship with the Duc d'Orléans apparently acquired considerable weight in the counsels of the Regency, he was gradually shelved, from lack, as it would seem, of real capacity to play the part he aspired to play in the government. He retired into private life, to digest his spleen. or rather to pour it out in the pages of his Memoirs. For if it was love that inspired the Letters of Madame de Sévigné, it was the contrary passion which presided over the writing of the Memoirs of Saint-Simon. He was a good hater, and, looking with jaundiced eyes at the comedy of Court life in which he had ceased to play a part, he avenged himself by painting it for posterity with a frank disavowal of any claim to impartiality. The writing of his Memoirs (for which, indeed, he had taken notes from the beginning) occupied the last twenty-two years of his life. Upon his death the Government laid hand on his papers, and, though some extracts leaked out from time to time, it was not until 1830 that the Memoirs saw the light of day in anything like their integrality.

THE PEASANT MYSTIFIED

The Jest of a Grand Seigneur.

Charnacé était un garçon d'esprit, qui avait été page du Roi et officier dans ses gardes du corps, fort du monde, et puis retiré chez lui, où il avait souvent fait bien des fredaines; mais il avait toujours trouvé bonté et protection dans le Roi. Il en fit une ¹ entre autres, pleine d'esprit, et dont on ne put que rire.

Il avait une très longue et parfaitement belle avenue devant sa maison en Anjou, dans laquelle était placée une maison de paysan et son petit jardin, qui s'y était apparemment trouvée lorsqu'elle fut plantée, et que jamais Charnacé ni son père n'avaient pu réduire à la leur vendre, quelque avantage qu'ils lui en eussent offert, et c'est une opiniâtreté dont quantité de petits propriétaires se piquent, pour faire enrager des gens à la convenance et quelquefois à la nécessité desquels ils sont, Charnacé, ne sachant plus qu'y faire, avait laissé cela là depuis très longtemps sans en plus parler. Enfin, fatigué de cette chaumine, qui lui bouchait tout l'agrément de son avenue, il imagina un tour de passepasse. Le paysan qui y demeurait, et à qui elle appartenait, était tailleur de son métier quand il trouvait à l'exercer, et il était chez lui tout seul, sans femme ni enfants. Charnacé l'envoie chercher, lui dit qu'il est mandé à la cour pour un emploi de conséquence, qu'il est pressé de s'y rendre, mais qu'il lui faut une livrée. Ils font marché comptant ; mais Charnacé stipule qu'il ne veut point se fier à ses délais, et que, movennant quelque chose de plus, il ne veut point qu'il sorte de chez lui que sa livrée ne soit faite, et qu'il le couchera, le nourrira et le payera avant de le renvoyer. tailleur s'y accorde, et se met à travailler. Pendant qu'il v est occupé. Charnacé fait prendre avec la dernière exactitude le plan et les dimensions de sa maison et de son jardin, des pièces de l'intérieur, jusque de la position des ustensiles et du petit meuble, fait démonter la maison et emporter tout ce qui y était, remonte la maison, telle qu'elle était au juste dedans et dehors, à 1 i.e. une fredaine.

quatre portées de mousquet, à côté de son avenue, replace tous les meubles et ustensiles dans la même position en laquelle on les avait trouvés, et rétablit le petit jardin de même, en même temps fait aplanir et nettoyer l'endroit de l'avenue où elle était, en sorte qu'il n'y parût pas.

Tout cela fut exécuté encore plus tôt que la livrée faite, et cependant le tailleur doucement gardé à vue, de peur de quelque indiscrétion. Enfin. la besogne achevée de part et d'autre. Charnacé amuse son homme jusqu'à la nuit bien noire, le pave et le renvoie content. Le voilà qui enfile l'avenue : bientôt il la trouve longue : après il va aux arbres, et n'en trouve plus. Il s'apercoit qu'il a passé le bout, et revient à tâtons chercher les arbres : il les suit à l'estime, puis croise, et ne trouve point sa maison. Il ne comprend point cette aventure. La nuit se passe dans cet exercice; le jour arrive, et devient bientôt assez clair pour aviser sa maison: il ne voit rien; il se frotte les veux; il cherche d'autres obiets, pour découvrir si c'est la faute de sa vue. Enfin il croit que le diable s'en mêle, et qu'il a emporté sa maison. A force d'aller, de venir, et de porter sa vue de tous côtés, il aperçoit, à une assez grande distance de l'avenue, une maison qui ressemble à la sienne comme deux gouttes d'eau. Il ne peut croire que ce la soit : mais la curiosité le fait aller où elle est, et où il n'a jamais vu de maison. Plus il approche, plus il reconnaît que c'est la sienne. Pour s'assurer mieux de ce qui lui tourne la tête, il présente sa clef, elle ouvre; il entre, il retrouve tout ce qu'il y avait laissé, et précisément dans la même place. Il est prêt à en pâmer, et il demeure convaincu que c'est un tour de sorcier. La journée ne fut pas bien avancée, que la risée du château et du village l'instruisit de la vérité du sortilège, et le

mit en furie. Il veut plaider, il veut demander justice à l'intendant, et partout on s'en moque. Le Roi le sut, qui en rit aussi, et Charnacé eut son avenue libre. S'il n'avait jamais fait pis, il aurait conservé sa réputation et sa liberté.

A VICTIM OF THE BASTILLE

Parmi ceux de la Bastille 1 il s'en trouva un arrêté depuis trente-cinq ans, le jour qu'il arriva à Paris d'Italie d'où il était, et qui venait voyager. On n'a jamais su pourquoi, et sans qu'il eût jamais été interrogé, ainsi que la plupart des autres. On se persuada que c'était une méprise. Quand on lui annonca sa liberté, il demanda tristement ce qu'on prétendait qu'il en pût faire. Il dit qu'il n'avait pas un sou, qu'il ne connaissait qui que ce fût à Paris, pas même une seule rue, personne en France, que ses parents d'Italie étaient apparemment morts depuis qu'il en serait parti, que ses biens apparemment aussi avaient été partagés depuis tant d'années qu'on n'avait point eu de nouvelles de lui : qu'il ne savait que devenir. Il demanda de rester à la Bastille le reste de ses jours avec la nourriture et le logement. Cela lui fut accordé avec la liberté qu'il v voudrait prendre.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE

L'Angleterre presque en même temps perdit, dans un simple particulier, un de ses principaux ornements, je veux dire le chevalier Temple, qui a également figuré avec la première réputation dans les lettres et dans les sciences, et dans celle de la politique et du gouverne-

 $^{^{1}}$ i. e. those imprisoned by $\mathit{lettres}$ de cachet who were set free by the Regent after the death of Louis XIV.

ment, et qui s'est fait un grand nom dans les plus grandes ambassades et les premières médiations de paix générale. C'était, avec beaucoup d'esprit, d'insinuation, de fermeté et d'adresse, un homme simple d'ailleurs, qui ne cherchait point à paraître, et qui aimait à se réjouir, et à vivre libre en vrai Anglais, sans aucun souci d'élévation, de biens ni de fortune. Il avait partout beaucoup d'amis, et des amis illustres qui s'honoraient de son commerce. Dans un voyage qu'il fit en France pour son plaisir, le duc de Chevreuse, qui le connaissait par ses ouvrages, le vit fort. Ils se rencontrèrent un matin dans la galerie de Versailles, et les voilà à raisonner machines et mécaniques. M. de Chevreuse, qui ne connaissait point d'heure quand il raisonnait, le tint si longtemps que deux heures sonnèrent. A ce coup d'horloge M. Temple interrompit M. de Chevreuse, et le prenant par le bras : 'Je vous assure, monsieur.' lui dit-il, 'que de toutes les sortes de machines je n'en connais aucune qui soit si belle, à l'heure qu'il est, qu'un tourne-broche, et je m'en vais tout courant en éprouver l'effet.' Il lui tourna le dos et le laissa fort étonné qu'il pût songer à dîner.

LOUIS XIV'S ADVICE ON HIS DEATH-BED TO HIS GREAT-GRANDSON, AFTERWARDS LOUIS XV

Quelque temps après il manda à la duchesse de Ventadour de lui amener le Dauphin. Il le fit approcher et lui dit ces paroles devant Madame de Maintenon et le très peu des plus intimement privilégiés ou valets nécessaires qui les recueillirent: 'Mon enfant, vous allez être un grand roi; ne m'imitez pas dans le goût que j'ai eu pour les bâtiments¹, ni dans celui que j'ai eu pour la • e.g. the Palace of Versailles.

guerre 1; tâchez, au contraire, d'avoir la paix avec vos voisins. Rendez à Dieu ce que vous lui devez; reconnaissez les obligations que vous lui avez, faites-le honorer par vos sujets. Suivez toujours les bons conseils, tâchez de soulager vos peuples, ce que je suis assez malheureux pour n'avoir pu faire. N'oubliez point la reconnaissance que vous devez à madame de Ventadour. Madame,' s'adressant à elle, 'que je l'embrasse'; et en l'embrassant lui dit: 'Mon cher enfant, je vous donne ma bénédiction de tout mon cœur.' Comme on eut ôté le petit prince de dessus le lit du roi, il le redemanda, l'embrassa de nouveau, et, levant les mains et les yeux au ciel, le bénit encore. Ce spectacle fut extrêmement touchant; la duchesse de Ventadour se hâta d'emporter le Dauphin et de le remener dans son appartement.

¹ Louis waged four great wars, of which the last, the War of the Spanish Succession, lasted from 1701 to 1714.

APPENDIX

ON THE CHIEF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OLD AND MODERN FRENCH

(Old French is abbreviated O.F. and printed in Roman characters. Modern French is abbreviated M.F. and printed in italics.)

It is out of the question to attempt within the compass of a few pages anything like a systematic exposition of the grammar of Old French. But the following hints will materially contribute to the ease with which anything but the oldest French may be read.

I. ORTHOGRAPHY

1. In O.F. x was originally simply an abbreviation for us, and is so to be read. Thus maus, pl. of mal, was written max; deus, dieus, old nom. forms of dieu, were written dex, diex; mieus (mieux) was written miex; cieus (cieux), ciex; chevaus (chevaux), chevax, &c.

At a later date x was used as the equivalent of s, and so maus, dieus, mieus, &c., were written maux, dieux, mieux, &c.

Thus O.F. x may stand for M.F. us, ux, or s.

2. In O.F. z was an abbreviation for ts, and was originally so pronounced. Later it came to be pronounced like simple s, which in many cases was substituted for it in the spelling, so that in M.F. s and z came to be regarded as equivalents.

Thus O.F. z may stand for M.F. z or s, and O.F. s for M.F. s or z.

Examples: montez-montés; avés-avez.

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3. In O.F. I was at a certain stage vocalized into u, and ultimately so written. Thus altres—autres; fals—faux.

At a later stage this I was wrongly reintroduced in the spelling, where it was really already represented by u, so that the two letters appear side by side.

Thus faus was written fauls or even faulx; faute was written faulte. &c.

4. This practice of introducing anew into the spelling of a word a letter which appeared in the Latin prototype, but which had rightly disappeared from O.F. because it had ceased to be sounded, or had been replaced by another letter when it had changed its sound, became very common after the fifteenth century. These intrusive letters have since sometimes dropped out again, but have also often remained.

Thus O.F. and M.F. soudain was written for a time soubdain (Lat. subitaneus); O.F. and M.F. neveu was written nepveu (Lat. nepotem); O.F. conter was written (and in one sense is still written) compter (Lat. computare); O.F. ni was written and is still written nid (Lat. nidus), &c.

- 5. A M.F. double consonant will generally be represented in O.F. by the simple consonant, thus belebelle, &c.
- 6. Letters which have grown silent in M.F. are often no longer written. This applies particularly to s before consonants. Frequently its absence is noted in M.F. by an accent.

Thus estoit— $\acute{e}tait$; fust— $f\^{u}t$; alast— $all\^{u}t$; fantosme— $fant\^{o}me$.

The missing letter often survives in the English cognate word.

Thus beste—bête (Eng. beast); forest—forêt (Eng. forest); chastel—château (Eng. castle), &c.

7. The spelling of the oldest French was thus much more nearly phonetic than is the case with M.F. It follows that where an O.F. word is unrecognizable at first sight, if it be pronounced the ear will very often give the clue.

Thus cler—clair; pié—pied; ele—aile; dens—dents; fet—fait; set—sait, &c.

II. ACCIDENCE

A. Nouns and Adjectives.

1. The O.F. nouns and adjectives retain two cases from the Latin, the nominative and the oblique, the latter used as accusative and after all prepositions.

The great majority of masculine nouns and adjectives have final s in the nom. sing. and in the obl. pl. (like Latin murus, muros). In the obl. sing. and nom. pl. this s is usually wanting (as in Latin murum, muri). The masc. noun and adj. are thus most frequently declined as follows:

		Sing.	Pl.
Nom.		murs	mur
Obl.	,	mur	murs

The nom. sing. and obl. pl. are identical in form, both ending in s, whilst the obl. sing. and nom. pl. are also identical, both lacking this s.

In later O.F. this distinction was extended also to feminine nouns, which originally, as in M.F., had no distinction of case.

Thus the tiro is apt to mistake a singular for a plural, and vice versa. The context, and, if the noun is a nominative, the verbal termination, will keep him right.

Examples. Li jor sont caut, lone et cler (Auc. et Nic.)
—les jours sont chauds, longs et clairs. Uns escuiers est

descenduz (Belle Doette)—un écuyer est descendu. But, voit l'escuier—elle voit l'écuyer.

2. If the stem of the noun ends in t, the ts which results when the inflexional s is added is written z (cf. Orthography, § 2). Thus nom. sing. and obl. pl. venz, obl. sing. and nom. pl. vent; morz est mes sires—mon seigneur est mort; granz colps—grands coups, &c.

Certain other consonants fall out before the s, but reappear in the cases which lack s. Thus obl. sing. and nom. pl. sac, nom. sing. and obl. pl. sas. So also clef, cles; corn, cors; &c.

3. A limited number of names of persons have a distinctive form for the nom. sing. The chief are:

Nom.	Obl.	M.F.	
cuens	comte	comte	
om	ome	homme	
sire	seignor	seigneur	
emperere	empereor	empereur	
ber	baron	baron	

The four latter, too, like the feminine nouns, take a final s in the nom. sing. in later O.F.

Examples: ou est mes sires (Belle Doette)—où est mon seigneur; but, por son seignor—pour son seigneur.

4. Many adjectives, which in Latin had only one form for masc. and fem., have in O.F. also one and the same form for the two genders. Thus grant, fort, vert, tel, mortel, &c., may be either masc. or fem. in O.F.

B. Verbs.

Space lacks for more than a few hints with regard to the highly complicated verbal inflexions, but the following will be found helpful:

1. 1st sing. pres. ind.—In the First Conjugation this

frequently lacks the final e mute. Thus je chant—je chante.

In the other conjugations it lacks the final s, where the Latin had no consonant from which it could develop. Thus je part—je pars; je voi—je vois (Lat. video); je croi—je crois (Lat. credo).

2. Present Subjunctive.—In the First Conjugation the absence of mute e in the termination of the 2nd and 3rd sing. is frequently a mark of the subjunctive; its presence, of the indicative.

In the other conjugations the reverse holds. The absence of the mute e in the sing. is frequently a mark of the indic., its presence of the subj.

- 3. Preterite.—The preterite is derived from the Lat. perfect, and may thus frequently be easily identified. In the First Conjugation it has the characteristic vowel a, as in M.F.
- 4. Future.—In O. Fr. the vowel a can, with few exceptions, only occur in the final syllable in a preterite of the First Conjugation or in a future singular of all conjugations. The latter may as a rule easily be distinguished by the preceding r.

The other tenses are usually sufficiently near the M.F. to be readily recognizable.

III. SYNTAX

1. O.F. still has, like Latin, considerable liberty in the order of the words in the sentence.

Example: La toile à lui ensevelir Alast volentiers ses filz querre (La Housse partie)—Son fils serait allé volontiers chercher la toile pour l'ensevelir.

2. O.F. still has, like Latin, the option of omitting the pronoun subject, which must be supplied from the inflexional termination of the verb.

Examples: Se frères vous clamons, pas n'en devez avoir desdaing (Villon)—Si nous vous appelons frères, vous ne devez pas en avoir dédain; Lit en un livre, mais au cuer ne l'en tient (La Belle Doette), i.e. elle lit, il ne tient.

3. O.F. still has, in certain cases, like Latin, the power

to omit the preposition before the oblique case.

Examples: En non Deu, a l'eglise saint Pol (La Belle Doette)—au nom de Dieu, à l'église de saint Paul. Foi que doi sainte Marie (Colin Muset)—par la foi que je dois à sainte Marie.

IV. VOCABULARY

1. Many O.F. words have ceased to be used in M.F., or are used in a different sense. Such are explained in the notes. The student will be interested to observe that many of these still survive in English, or have retained their original meaning. Thus 'bacon' in the Roman du Renard, 'touaile' (towel) in Aucassin et Nicolette. Frequently, too, the English remains nearer the original form. Compare castle and castel with château; garden and gardin with jardin, &c.

2. Si and se, besides standing for si (if), from Lat. si, very frequently indeed represent Lat. sic (so) at the beginning of a clause, and are to be translated by 'thus, so, and', or frequently to be omitted in translation.

3. Que, introducing a clause, is frequently 'because, for'.

4. Car, in M.F. = Engl. 'for', is frequently used in O.F. to emphasize a command or request, much like M.F. donc. Example: Un beau don car me donez (Colin Muset)—donnez-moi donc un beau don.

5. Notice also eil, chil, cel, chel, cist, chist, cest, chest for ce, celui, &c.

If the student will read through one or two of the shorter extracts applying these hints, he will find little difficulty in reading any but the oldest French.

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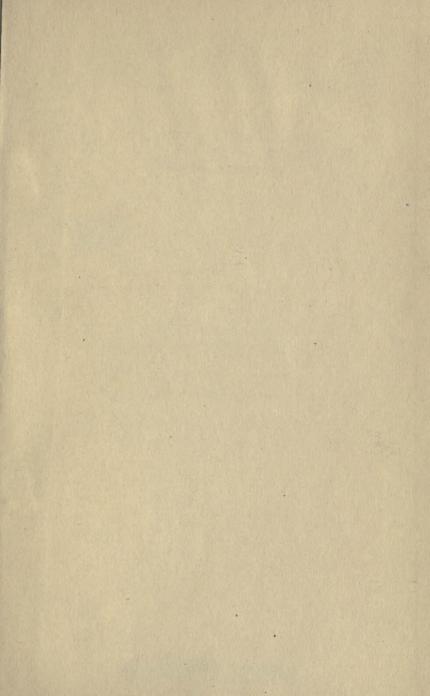
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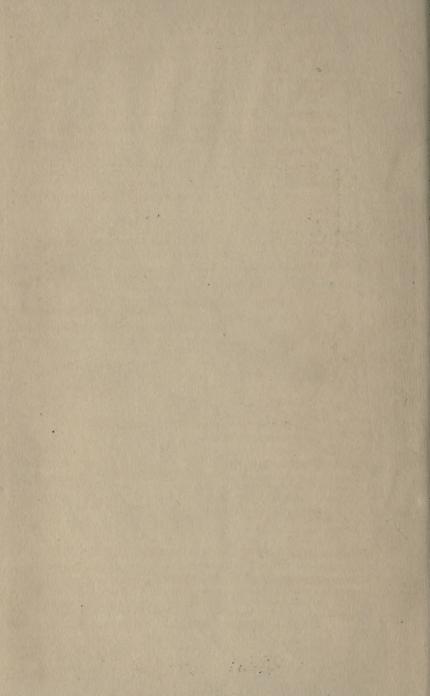
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